

# A YANKEE TRADER in the CALIFORNIA REDWOODS

by F.J. Monteagle



**East Bay Regional Park District**

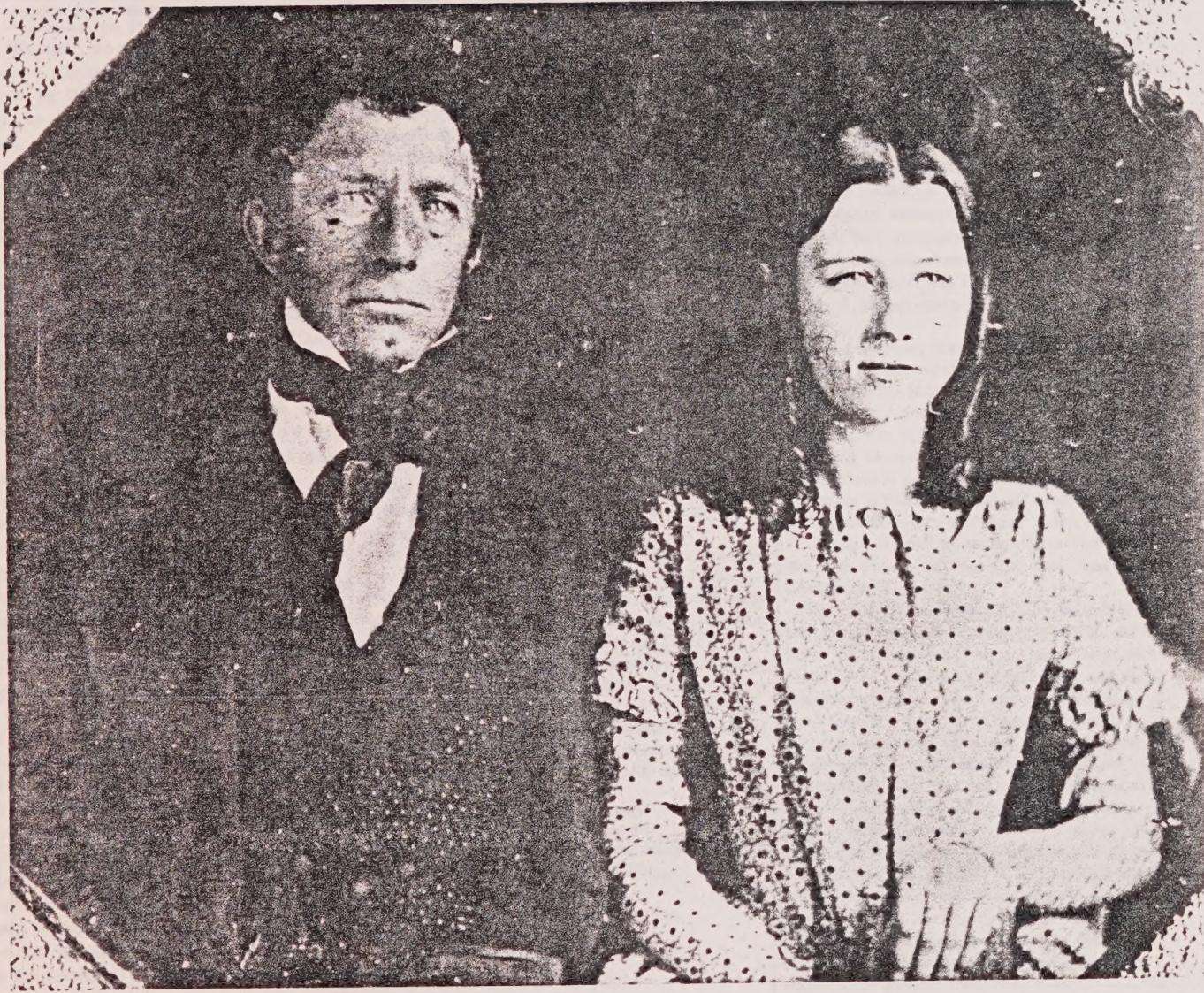
11500 SKYLINE BOULEVARD, OAKLAND, CA. 94619











EAST BAY REDWOODS DIARIST: Rather austere in appearance and by his own admission, "unsocial," Joseph P. Lamson, Maine expatriate, enigmatic widower and disappointed gold seeker, operated a combination lodging house, liquor and grocery store in the heart of virgin redwoods in the East Bay for about 18 months during the period 1853-55. The area is now Redwood Regional Park. A careful diarist and good observer, Lamson set down a day-to-day account of life in a brawling logging camp, chiefly for his daughter, Ann who remained in Maine. Lynchings, manhunts for escaped convicts and incredibly large redwoods were all grist to his pen.--Photo, courtesy, California Historical Society.

Photo No. 11186-3 EBRPD







# DAILY EVENING NEWS.

OFFICE—NO. 35 LONG WHARF, CORNER OF FRONT ST.

W. & C. JULIAN BARTLETT, Editors.

Wednesday Evening, August 23, 1854.

**Publication Office.**—The Publication Office of the *Evening News and Picayune*, is removed to No. 35 Commercial street, corner of Front, where all Advertisements and orders for Printing should be left.

**Agents for the Daily Evening News.**

M. ISAAC ROSENBAUM, Stockton.

Messrs. STILES & DODD, (Periodical agents) Benicia.

The Daily Circulation of the *Evening News* is nearly Double that of any Evening Paper in the State.

## "Justice to Frenchmen."

Under this head, we notice several days ago in *Le Messager* a communication sent from Mariposa and said by the editor, in his accompanying comments, to have been signed by sixty-seven Frenchmen. This communication struck us at the time as unjust, and calculated to have mischievous effects—and as we see it to-day translated into English and copied into one of the morning papers, we will endeavor to show in what its injustice and mischievous tendency, according to our opinion, consists.

This communication complains, and evidently with justice, of several brutal outrages that have been perpetrated upon Frenchmen at the Mariposa Camp; and also of the failure of the officers of justice to sufficiently punish those who committed them. So far we grant the writers are correct. If the outrages they recount were committed—and if the authorities permitted the perpetrators to escape with the light punishment stated, which we fully believe, not only because these gentlemen so state, but because of the exceeding probability of the facts—the Frenchmen of Mariposa have a right to complain of the injustice through the press. Such outrages should be made public; and when justice is refused at the hands of the judge, an appeal should be taken to the high court of public opinion. But what we think wrong, is the attempt made to create the belief that it was owing to the fact that these parties were *French* that this injustice was done them. When our papers from the interior are constantly filled with the accounts of lawless acts—when nothing is more common than to hear of outrages similar to those of which the correspondents of *Le Messager* complain—and when the general impunity of crime in California is a by-word—we cannot see how the French portion of the population can reasonably expect to escape, any more than the American portion, from the acts of outlaws—and we do think it unjust in them to attempt to raise a belief that a distinction is drawn against them because of their nationality; and that they are robbed, or beaten, or murdered, merely from the fact that they are Frenchmen.—Such is not in our opinion the case. If such outrages were confined to them, we would admit that there was some justice in such a belief. But, as every body knows, such is not the fact; Americans, Germans, Irish, Mexicans, and Frenchmen

Lynch Law in San Antonio!!

## TWO MEN HUNG!!!

The usually quiet little village of San Antonio on the opposite side of the Bay, was early this morning the scene of another sad and fearful instance of retributive justice under the summary code of Judge Lynch.

The circumstances of the case, as near as we can ascertain them, are as follows:—For several weeks past, the residents of the San Antonio encinal and vicinity, has been troubled and harassed continually by cattle thieves, who would visit their premises at night, and drive off all the most valuable stock they could find; fine milch cows, oxen, calves, etc. have thus disappeared from the corrals, and for the time being, all trace of them or the "lifters" lost.

Yesterday, however, the constable of Clinton Township, Mr. Carpenter, received information which led to the development of the whole matter. The culprits proved to be two men, one, a Frenchman, named Amande Careene and the other, a native of Illinois, but recently from Cincinnati, Ohio, known as Peter Auchimbault.

They keep a slaughter yard near San Antonio, in which were found several head of the stolen animals, three alive, and some four or five others killed. Upon examining the yard carefully, the skins of two cows, stolen last week from a person living in the town, were discovered in a deep hole, which had evidently been dug for the purposes of concealment. In the evening, the guilty parties were taken in custody, and placed under charge of deputy constables in Wetherell's Hotel to await examination before a Justice of the Peace.

Great excitement ensued upon the citizens learning the foregoing facts, and a short time after the arrest, a meeting was held by the Vigilance Committee, recently formed in Oakland, and others, to deliberate as to the expediency of immediate punishment by death. It was decided by a majority of one, that the law should take its course, and the accused be allowed to remain with the legal authorities.

During the night, however, a party of men, some forty or fifty in number, arrived from the red woods,—another meeting was held, and at six o'clock, this morning, the prisoners were taken to a place in the rear of the Mansion House to an oak tree and there hung.—The Frenchman is reputed to have been quite wealthy, and a large sum of money was offered by his countrymen who live in San Antonio, to save his life. The offer proved useless as did also a forcible attempt to rescue him. Archambault, we understand, has left a wife and family to mourn his loss and sorrow for his disgrace.

## Whig Nominations.

The following are the nominations made last night, by the Whig City and County Convention:

For Mayor—J. P. Haven.

City Tax Collector—Edward T. Batturs.

City Treasurer—Wm. Neely Johnson.

Recorder—W. R. Turner.

City Attorney—Lorenzo Sawyer.

Street Commissioner—Edward Ebbets.

The nomination of Mr. Haven for Mayor, was made on Monday evening, but owing to rumors of unfairness, in the balloting, Mr. H. sent in a note declining to accept the nomination, unless the gentlemen who competed for it, were satisfied and convinced that no taint rested upon the action of the Convention. The communication, after considerable discussion, was accepted as a resignation, and the Convention proceeded to make a second choice. On the 1st ballot, Mr. Haven was again

The Agricultural Fair, and Premiums.

We lay before our readers the following tale of a description of letters that editors are ten honored with. They will perceive that simple announcement of what we thought would be an interesting bit of news, viz: that our Agricultural Society had offered prizes for the f Babies, we have lost the favor of our patron, Jones; and as an offset, have made a fast fi of his wife, Mrs. Jones. We are very sure w not losers by this transaction—for with su friend at court as the lady, we need not fear that the man Jones will come over, and again scribe; we should lose our confidence in the else. We, as by gallantry bound, of course, t that the lady is perfectly right in contesting fo prize, and hope she may carry off the first h As to the place of meeting and the other par lars, we refer our correspondent to the edito the *Cal. Farmer*.

Mr. News:—In a late number of your paper, a list of premiums offered by the "California Agricultural Society," among which I noticed tw the two best specimens of babies. Now, Mr. Ne am a woman, and of course, take a great interest i "little innocents" and I am right glad to see this dence of interest shown in them by the "lords of tion."

You must know, dear sir, that I intend to have little one on hand at the time appointed, and I am tain, that if the judges decide fairly, that I'll tak of the prizes. You may think this partiality in me every one who has seen my boy, declare that he is markedly handsome child. It was only yesterday Mr. B. (who is a candidate for an office, and can our house to talk to my husband about politics,) de ed that never had he seen such a fine boy. So l for his age, (he will be ten months in Sept.) with fine features and such beautiful eyes! and withal a bright, intelligent look!

Now, Mr. News, (although I'm certain of win the prize,) Mr. Jones objects to "putting his son on bition, as if he was a prize pig or a fatted calf, poked in the ribs by sour old bachelors, and pinche interested grand-mothers," and declares that he wil listen to such a thing for a moment. But I am d mined to enter my little one, and take a premi "Competition," says Adam Smith, "is the life of tra and hence we find that where there is competition i manufacture or culture of any article, it is there ca: to its greatest perfection." The offering of prem for the finest stock, etc., in all countries, has prod the most beneficial results. Why should not this p to be the case with regard to babies? I can se good reason, Mr. News, and I have tried to argue point with my husband, but its no use, for every ti stump him in an argument, he hotly declares "women know nothing about such things," and the abominates "female Websters." What do you t about it? Don't you think it is natural and right me to insist, on having our "little responsibility," the exhibition? If so, please let me know the p where the exhibition is to be holden, and if you sh attend, look out for a bright, flaxen-haired, blue- youngster, you will find him in the arms of his mot

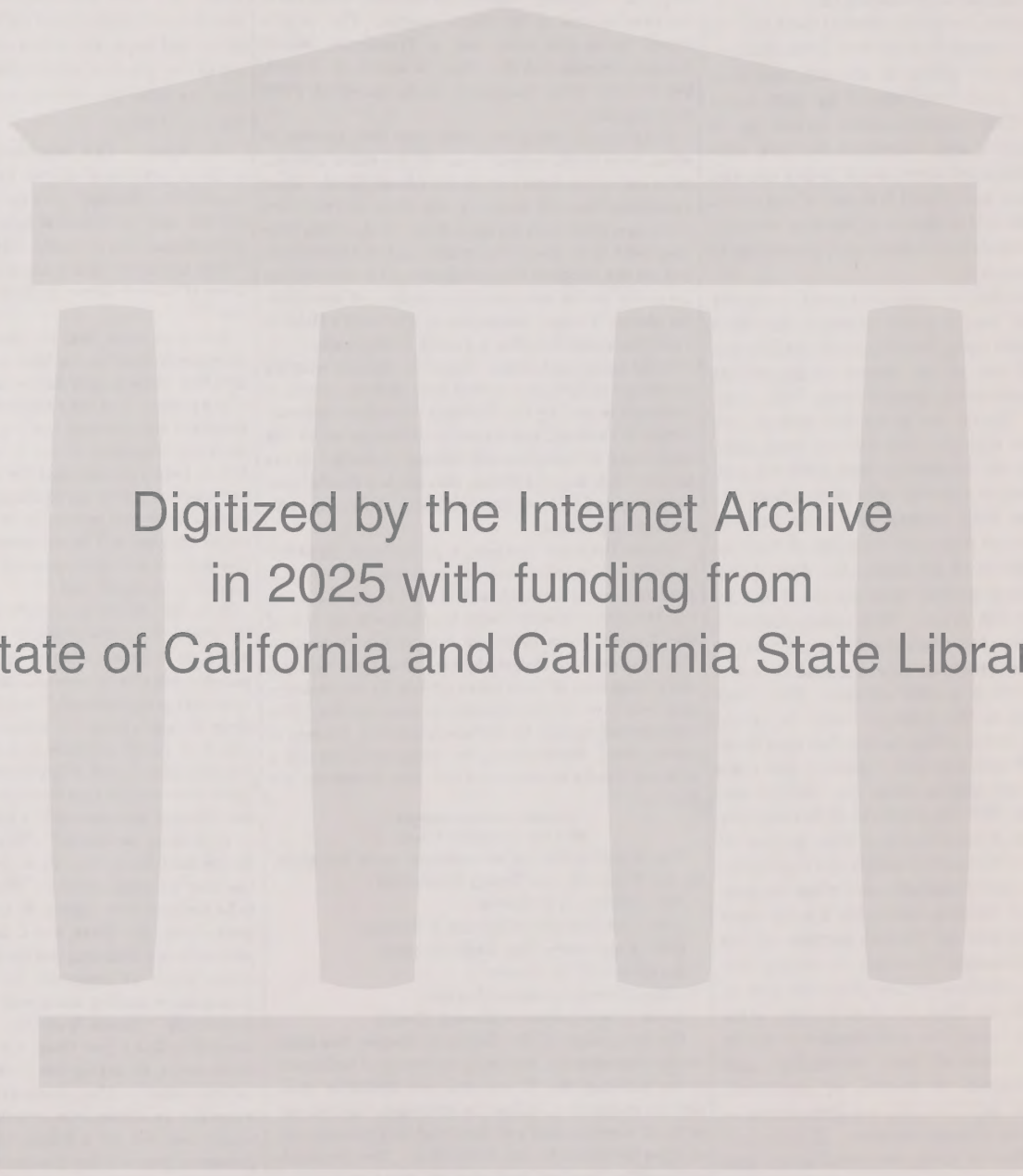
BETTY JONE

SAN FRANCISCO, Aug. 23d, 1854

Marriage Editor.

NEWS OF EAST BAY LYNCHINGS: Right next to the leader editorial of the San Francisco Daily Evening News which conceded that "the general impunity of crime is a by-word," was the latest intelligence from the "usually quiet little village of San Antonio" where some of the "redwood boys" or "redwood rangers" had come down out of their mountain fastness to lynch two alleged cattle thieves. "San Antonio" is now East Oakland; the "redwood boys" came from the area which is now Redwood Regional Park. The East Bay redwoods spawned at least four lynchings during the period 1854-55.--Photocopy, courtesy of the University of California's Bancroft Library. Photo No. 11186-1 EBRPD

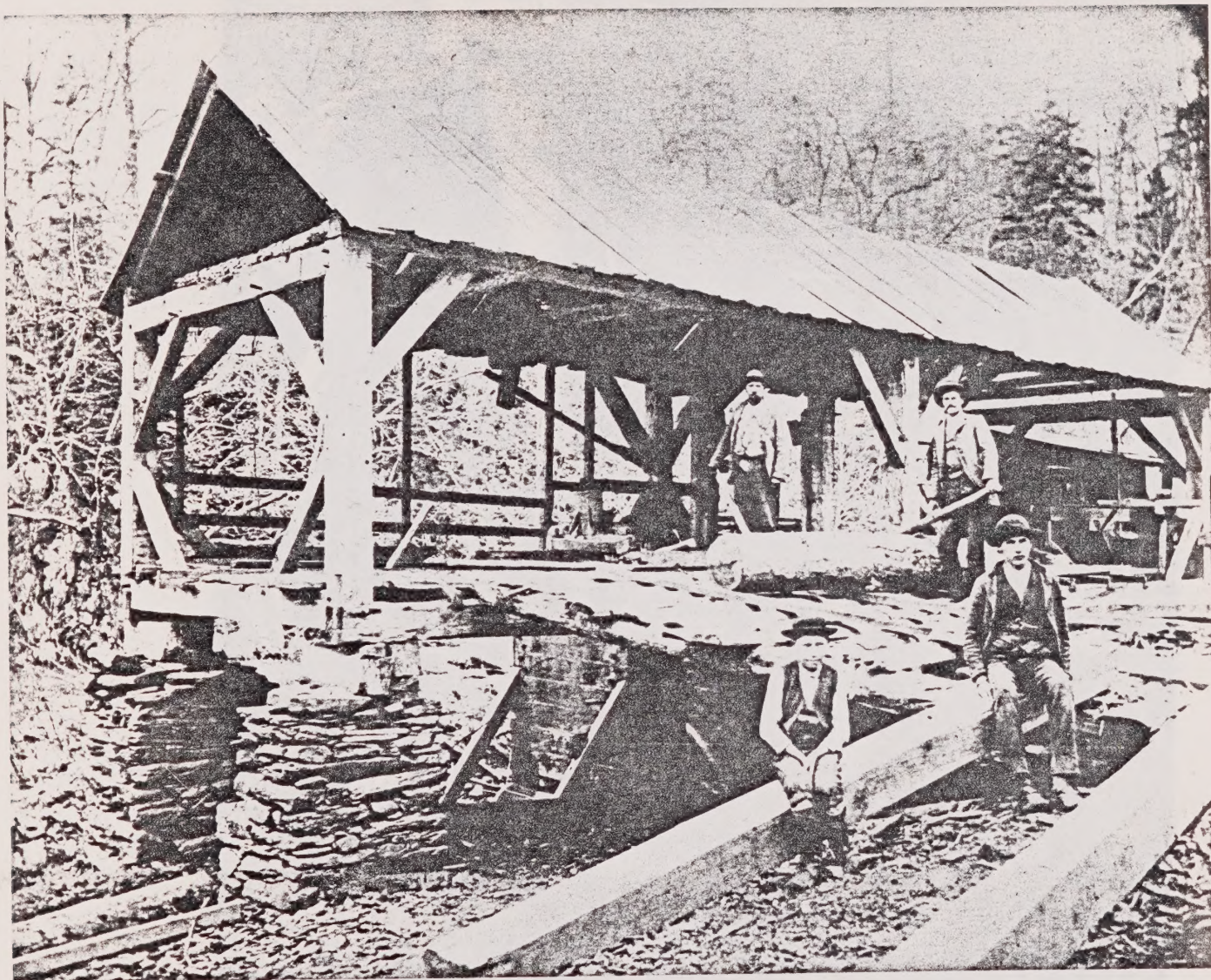




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*DAYS OF '49: This was the pioneer Palo Seco sawmill in the East Bay redwoods on Palo Seco Creek and not far from the present day East Bay Regional Park District's Redwood Regional Park. It is credited with being the first steam-powered mill in the region. Construction was begun in 1849 and the mill continued to operate until 1854. Wooden pegs were used in the construction. Everyone wore hats in those faroff days--even the youngsters in the foreground.*

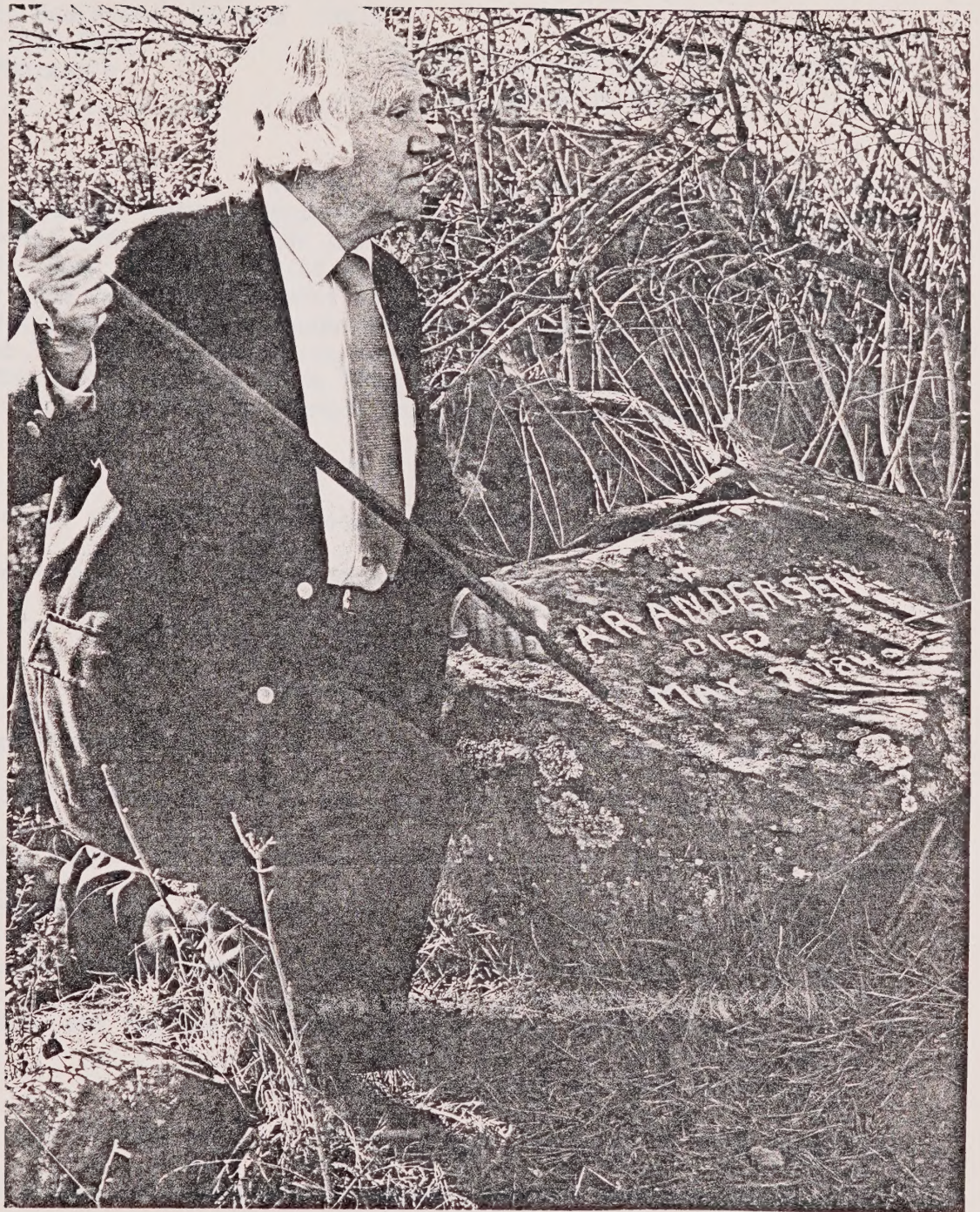
*--Oakland Public Library Collection Photo.*

*Photo No. 11186-2 EBRPD*









*BISHOP AND 1849 TOMB: Since, as far as is known, there are no living descendants of pioneering Methodist Minister William Taylor, who discovered this crude sandstone boulder tombstone October 21, 1849--only about five months after the interment--in what is now Redwood Regional Park, Retired Bishop Donald H. Tippet of the United Methodist Church visited the site. Here, he points to the inscription (strengthened with chalk for photographic purposes) holding the staff which Bishop Taylor used when he walked across Africa. Bishop Tippet, a Berkeley resident, was Methodist Bishop for the San Francisco area during the period 1948-68.*

*Photo No. 13161-8 EBRPD*







EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT  
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*WITH ILLUSTRATIONS, OR ILLUSTRATIONS  
AVAILABLE ON REQUEST*

(Ed's: This is an account of the harsh life in what is now mostly Redwood Regional Park, during the period 1853-55 when a redwood forest described as "the most magnificent on the continent" was being felled. Much of the material has never been published before and is replete with such dramatic incidents as four lynchings, manhunts for San Quentin convicts who escaped through cannon-fire, threats to "reduce Oakland to ashes," a coast redwood tree 33-1/2 feet in diameter, perhaps the largest in the world, and two crude 1849 graves, still within the boundaries of the park which lies both in Alameda and Contra Costa counties--fjm)

Redwood Regional Park, the darling of Sunday School picnickers and others, the locus for carefree pickup baseball games, horseback riding and other placid weekend relaxation, was once the grim staging area for at least four East Oakland lynchings.

During the approximate period 1840-60, a virgin redwood forest described as "the most magnificent on the continent" was being felled in what is now an East Bay Regional Park District 2074-acre two-county park. And the feared, hard-drinking and oath-bawling loggers, dubbed "the redwood boys, redwoodites or redwood rangers" by an awed Bay Area press, would emerge from the forest fastnesses from time to time to deal out summary and retributive justice to horse and cattle thieves.

According to accounts of timid observers, the redwoods were in many ways, a suburb of hell populated by ship deserters comparatively immune to degenerate refinements and who remained undefiled by temperance or cotillions and were tough and unregenerate to the end.

The park, all of which was once in Contra Costa County and 755 acres of which still remain within its boundaries, was also the site where grew a prodigious coast redwood that measured 33-1/2

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feet in diameter, perhaps the largest of its kind in the world. And two crude 1849 grave markers, mentioned by Bible-thumping Methodist Minister William Taylor in his "California Life," published in 1853, are still visible in the park.

The incredible story, much of which lay sleeping in the archives of the prestigious California Historical Society and the University of California's Bancroft Library, continues, in summary:

- In Redwood Regional Park and adjacent areas, there were at least 10 sawmills, nine steam powered and one driven by water; the California Condor, the "rarest of all birds and the Thunder bird of legend," of which, perhaps, only 35 to 50 now survive, was commonplace in the park and in one hour, more than 50 "flew over the forest," 25 being counted in a few moments; and 250 "redwood rangers," enraged by the fact that three oxen owned by Hiram Thorne, a sawmill and toll road operator (Oakland's Thornhill Drive), had disappeared, surrounded the home of a suspect, an Oakland deputy pound keeper, threatening lynching; marched up and down Oakland streets carrying rifles; and delivered a 24-hour ultimatum that unless their demands were met, they would "lay the town in ashes." Mayor Horace Carpentier, a prudent man, acknowledged city liability and pledged himself to see that payment was made.

- Belying its tranquil existence today, the park was the scene for a night-time manhunt by some 110 armed and mounted men searching for about 25 hardened felons who had escaped from a San Quentin Prison Camp on the Marin Islands in 1854; pet rattlesnakes were "barbarously murdered" by being barbecued alive by some drunks who concluded "their orgy with delirium tremens;" fearsome grizzly bears and mountain lions frequented the redwoods and raided the stock; and for raffish,

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light comedy relief, "Hannah," a cigar-smoking 18-year-old "Kanaka lady" who had married a sailor at 13, rode horseback through the redwoods, attired in a blue calico dress, a man's straw hat and a woolen jacket belonging to her husband, "Kanaka Joe."

- Then there was "Parson" William J. Brown, a ham-fisted "fighting Missouri Campbellite minister" who rode a mule, split rails, posts, pickets and shingles during the week and preached under the redwoods on the Sabbath. Annoyed by a persistent fellow who tried to cadge a drink on the Oakland-bound boat, he sent him sprawling to the deck and would have stomped him if women had not shrieked.

"This little affair," a contemporary diarist wrote, "very naturally increased the parson's popularity in the redwoods and he was highly applauded for the spirit he had manifested on the occasion."

- Oath-shouting bullwhackers spurring on the laboring ox teams in Redwood Canyon with braided green hide lashes 12 to 20 feet long, cracked their whips until "the reports resounded through the canyon like an irregular discharge of musketry. They are cruel instruments of torture and are used without mercy..."

Much of this account comes from the prolific pen of Joseph P. Lamson of Lubec, Me., who wrote under the name of James Lamson and arrived in San Francisco aboard the Barque James W. Paige on September 7, 1852. But other solid historic research in the stacks of the California Historical Society is the work of Sherwood D. Burgess who authored a monograph in its quarterly entitled "The Forgotten Redwoods of the East Bay."

Lamson modestly insisted his diary or journal "did not aspire to the dignity of a book..." and he entitled it "Nine Years



Adventures in California from September, 1852 to September, 1861" with excursions into Oregon, Washington and Nevada.

Lamson was an enigmatic widower and disappointed gold seeker who came to the redwoods in July, 1853 to operate a combination lodging house, liquor and grocery store and stayed until about January, 1855 when little timber remained and he removed to the Moraga Redwoods to the northeast.

He was an amateur naturalist, botanist and ornithologist; an observant diarist who occasionally wrote articles for "Hutching's California Magazine," a respected publication of the day; for a brief period was the redwood forests' Justice of the Peace who was indicted for altering and falsifying records but subsequently acquitted; and a devoted correspondent, writing regularly to his only child, Anne W. Lamson, who remained in Maine.

Since Lamson is the protagonist in the 1853-55 portion of this story of the redwoods in Redwood Regional Park and the nearby areas, an appropriate title might be "A Yankee Trader in the California Redwoods."

And a personality profile may be in order.

"I am," he wrote, "unfortunately possessed of an unsocial disposition. I love solitude...I am smarting under the vexations and disappointments incident, perhaps, more than in any other country, to a life in this land of gold...Greedy California is where money is worth two to five per cent per month..."

Lamson continually tramped the redwood trails in his red morroco-topped boots, carrying a redwood or manzanita cane.

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An illustrator as well as a writer, he tells of "placing a sheet of paper in the crown of my hat" to sketch a "lofty oak, just outside of the village of Martinez."

(Next: Lamson keeps pet rattlesnakes and thinks they look "the picture of affection and innocence"; a Coast Redwood 33-1/2 feet in diameter; and a tale of 10 redwood sawmills in the East Bay hills.)

##### 12-76



EAST BAY REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT  
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Installment Two - Redwood Regional Park

A strange man, Joseph Lamson bought and kept rattlesnakes in cages which he thought looked, "despite their venomous natures, the picture of affection and innocence...We often sat and gazed at each other for several minutes through the glass that separated us... It may, perhaps, excite a smile when I say that I acquired a degree of affection for the reptiles.

"They had become my pets and I felt a sort of companionship for them..."

He also trapped foxes, having 20 in cages at one time and experimented with taming condors and ravens. His last middle redwoods abode was a two-room shack, about 16 by 20 feet near Spicer's Mill where he performed his daily ablutions in a wooden tub fashioned from a powder keg.

"My house," he wrote, "is situated about equidistant from my former cabin and Spicer's Mill, about 100 rods from each but quite hidden from the view of both, by intervening hills.

"I have placed it at the foot of a hill which is covered at this season of the year with a fine green herbage.

"Several large oaks and madrones and some shrubbery consisting of hazel, whortleberry, wild rose and other bushes, intermingled with raspberry vines, ferns, soap plants, the yerba buena and some flowers grow at the base and, in some places, nearly cover the hill."

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To set the scene for Lamson's 18-month stay in the East Bay hills, it is necessary to know that the redwood forests in which he made his home and conducted his modest business were variously described as 1-1/2 by a half a mile or 3-1/2 by two miles in extent, depending on whose figures you believe.

Dr. William P. Gibbons, pioneer Alameda physician and botanist, who discovered the 33-1/2-foot redwood stump said the area "must have constituted the most magnificent forest on the continent" and declared trees 12, 16 and 20 feet in diameter were common.

Felling of trees first began about 1840 and by 1858-60 every first growth redwood including the colossus atop Redwood Peak, which measured 33-1/2 feet in diameter and must have towered some 300 feet, were gone.

The forest was arbitrarily divided into three sections:

The San Antonio or "first" redwoods on the skyline and western slopes of the hills. This probably included today's Joaquin Miller Park.

The so-called second, "middle redwoods" or "center forest" in Mill Canyon constituting what is now Redwood Regional Park and the Redwood Creek area.

Further to the northeast, the third or Moraga Redwoods on Upper San Leandro Creek in the vicinity of what is now the community of Canyon.

- The first saw mill to be erected was the Spier and Hinckley Mill, a water-powered affair that went into operation in 1841. The proprietors were Nathan Spier and Capt. William S. Hinckley.

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- Next was the pioneer Palo Seco Mill, the first steam-powered mill in the East Bay Redwoods. It was situated on Palo Seco Creek a short distance above Dimond Canyon and construction was begun in 1849 by two Frenchmen, Joseph Lavigne and Jean Baptiste Bajoux. The succession of ownerships thereafter included Henry Meiggs, San Francisco wheeler and dealer of Meiggs Wharf fame; Oakland Banker Volney D. Moody whose name was often associated with the mill; and Daniel A. Plummer who closed the mill in 1854.

About 50 men were employed here, and lumber from the Palo Seco Mill built the Moses Chase home on East 10th Street, reportedly the first frame house erected in Oakland.

(Next: Information about eight more of the steam-powered saw mills in what is now Redwood Regional Park and environs in the 1850's.)

##### 12-76



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### Installment Three - Redwood Regional Park

Transported into the past, a century and a quarter or so, present-day environmentalists and nature lovers would have viewed with distaste, the steam-powered sawmills dotting the banks of Redwood Creek, chewing away at the virgin coast redwood growth in what is now Redwood Regional Park.

Continuing the tally of those primitive saw mills, these were the ownerships:

- The Prince Mill, was situated at the head of Redwood Canyon and below Redwood Peak on 320 acres of school warrant land which could be acquired from the state for \$1.25 an acre by thrifty millmen and was owned and operated by Brothers Thomas B. and William C. Prince. The Princes owned redwood acreage from ridge to ridge and operated the mill during the period 1852-56. They were 'forty-niners and nephews of Elam Brown, early-day Contra Costa county settler credited with being the "father" of Lafayette.

- The Spicer Mill as it was afterward to be known, was near the Prince Mill and was erected by Josiah Witherell and Nathaniel Lamson about 1852. Land litigation began almost immediately with the Prince Brothers and in a forced sale, Luther Mills and James Vantine took over. They in turn, sold out to Henry Spicer. This mill, reportedly, had a capacity of 9000 board feet of lumber a day. In the 1853 election, a voting precinct was established at the mill.

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- The Tupper and Hamilton Mill was established on 350 acres at the lower end or mouth of Redwood Canyon and the proprietors were Chester Tupper and Richard Hamilton. The mill burned down in 1854.

- The Eagar (correct) and Brown Mill was established about 1854, costing in the vicinity of \$10,000 and reportedly had a capacity of 12,000 board feet of lumber a day. The lands of Thomas Eagar and Erasmus D. Brown apparently overlapped, and rather than litigate the matter, they formed a profitable partnership. Eagar, a native of Ossining, N. Y., came to California in 1846 with Sam Brannan's party aboard the ship "Brooklyn" and twice served in the legislature as an Assemblyman from Santa Cruz and Alameda counties and also was an Alameda County Supervisor in 1856. He is credited with being one of the first Americans to explore Contra Costa County (the "opposite shore"). He married Angelina Tupper. In 1854, the Eagar and Brown Mill was hauling finished redwood to the San Antonio wharf in East Oakland to be sold for \$25 to \$35 a thousand.

- The Thorne Mill was a costly \$20,000 affair situated in the Moraga Redwoods. It was owned by Hiram Thorne and William Hamilton and erected in 1852. The company controlled a road leading to the village of Clinton in what is now East Oakland.

- The Taylor and Owens Mill, founded by William H. Taylor and James Owens, operated during the period 1849-51 and was situated in the Moraga Redwoods about where the old Sacramento Northern Railroad's Pinehurst Station was built.

- The Moses Davis Mill also operated in the area--probably the Moraga Redwoods--but information about it has proved elusive.

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- Likewise, only fragmentary information exists relating to the Lewis Mill which, according to one 1923 account "stood not far from what became Joaquin Miller's "Hights." (correct)

Coursing through the center of the "middle redwoods" (now Redwood Regional Park) was Redwood Creek which normally was hidden from view by logs, bark, shavings and rubbish thrown over it to form a road but which, after heavy rains, was "swollen into a wild, turbid roaring brook which sweeps over the road..."

(Next: "Judge Lynch" rides. The "redwood boys" or "redwood rangers" swing into action during the period 1854-55 and, using the East Bay redwoods as a staging area, visit summary and retributive justice against alleged horse and cattle thieves. Four are hung.)

##### 12-76

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Installment Four - Redwood Regional Park

During the frenetic period of about one year--August 1854, to July, 1855,--three lynchings, one a "double feature"--took place at the landing and settlement of San Antonio, a little below the intersection of what is now East 12th Street and 14th Avenue (and then in Clinton) and in every instance both Lamson and the San Francisco press gave full credit to the "redwood boys" as they were sometimes called. A fourth hanging took place just across the bridge from Oakland in Clinton.

There was a sort of homicidal gaiety about these impromptu affairs which originated in the East Bay Redwoods, and the newspapers heralded them with headlines liberally punctuated with exclamation points, such as:

"Lynch Law in San Antonio!! Two Men Hung!!!;"  
"Lynch Law in San Antonio. Two Cattle Thieves Hung;" "The Excitement in Oakland! Attack Upon the Jail!! One of the Horse Thieves Hung!!!;"  
"Another Lynching at San Antonio. More of the 'Redwood Rangers';" and  
"Great Excitement in Oakland. Capture of Two Horse Thieves. A Man Hung."

The newspapers did not always agree on the specifics of these sanguinary affairs and the spelling of the victims' names, but these were, after all, mere details. "Judge Lynch" was in full command at these "floorless jigs" and the participants were noticeably reticent when it came to interviews. There was even talk of Grand Jury investigations and some Oaklanders were "highly exasperated," according to Lamson, "at the audacity of the 'redwood boys' and threatened to go and hang them from their own trees.

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"The boys replied that they would be happy to see them at their earliest convenience."

Inevitably, nothing came of these post-lynching threats and cheerful tumults.

The double lynching for cattle stealing--first in the series--occurred in the "gray of the morning," as the Daily Alta California poetically phrased it, on Wednesday, August 23, 1854.

The luckless victims according to a variety of newspaper spellings were two San Antonio area butchers named Amadee Canu, or, if you prefer, Amade Carcene, Amadere Carenne or Amedee (correct) Canu and Pierre Archambault, also referred to as Peter Auchimbault or Peter Aughambault. Readers could take their pick.

There was the regrettable matter of a third man who was almost hanged by mistake and, according to Lamson, "was in an agony of fear and horror, begged most piteously for his life, protested his innocence and promised to make important disclosures if they would but spare his life..."

Fortunately, the mob's mistake was detected in time, and "he was, therefore, led back again," Lamson recounted, "more dead than alive, having endured far more suffering than his hardened confederate, whom he saw hanging from the tree..." The "right man" thereupon, was "taken to the tree and suspended beside his dead comrade."

The hangman's tree was an oak at the rear of San Antonio's Mansion House, the village's leading hostelry which had rather ornate steps running clear across the front of the building. It is reasonable to suppose that early risers in the hotel with less desirable rooms at the rear of the establishment may have had a fine view of impromptu and summary justice at work with the inevitable exclamatory ending.

*Installment four, page 3, Redwood History*

(Next: Stolen cattle in the abattoir. The "redwood boys" become impatient with "due process" and summon a lynch posse from the redwoods for a double hanging.)

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Installment Five - Redwood Regional Park

Understandably, given the times and the primitive forms of communication, the accounts of the events leading to the moment when the two unfortunate accused cattle thieves began "kicking the air" while suspended from a live oak, did not always agree, but this is a distillation of what Lamson wrote and the newspapers published:

The East Oakland area had been "cursed with the presence of the most notorious cattle thieves;" an audacious band had drive off 87 head in one night; and so, when eight or 10 animals, including three oxen belonging to James Andrews, disappeared, suspicion focused on Canu and Archambault and their slaughter house.

Two newspaper accounts have it that when the premises were searched by Clinton Township Constable George Carpenter in the men's absence, three stolen live animals were found and the branded hides of five or six more were found in a deep hole.

However, the San Francisco Daily Herald claimed three or four men, including the Clinton Toll Bridge Keeper, first searched the abattoir and then laid in wait and apprehended the pair in flagrante delicto as they led five stolen cattle into the enclosure, slaughtered them and buried the hides. This would, indeed, have been a neat, comprehensive case, if true.

Anyhow, the men--Canu reputedly was quite wealthy and his wife, operated the Hotel de France near San Antonio--were hustled away to Witherell's Hotel for safekeeping since the San Antonio did not boast a jail.

more--

They were "placed in charge of a strong body of men to prevent escape" and Lamson observed that as a wise precaution, Andrews, who had lost the three oxen, was part of the posse.

Meanwhile, a newly-formed Oakland Vigilance Committee debated whether to let the law take its course since, as Lamson phrased it, "under the existing state of things with regard to the administration of justice, it was nearly equivalent to giving them their liberty..."

Law and justice prevailed by one vote but Lamson observed that "it was still resolved by a number of determined fellows that they should not so easily escape."

The pair appeared before Justice of the Peace Walker and asked for a day's delay to obtain additional witnesses.

Meanwhile, according to Lamson, "a party proceeded to the house and corral of the thieves and burned them up with all their contents.

"Not a single article was appropriated by these avengers.

"It was justice, not plunder sought. Valuable saddles, harnesses and furniture were all sacrificed."

During the night, Lamson wrote, some of the thieves' friends--doubtless members of the camorra--gathered near the hotel "but they were drive off by 'the redwood boys' who had stationed themselves around the house."

Now, Lamson continued, those who sought lynch law "began to see that they must act, and act promptly or the whole business would prove but a farce and the guilty villains would escape.

"They, therefore, dispatched horsemen to the Redwoods, summoning the people again to come and assist at the execution.



Before morning, a sufficient number had arrived to carry out their plans and they immediately proceeded to action."

Both the San Francisco Daily Evening News and the San Francisco Herald agreed that a "posse" of 40 or 50 of the "redwood boys" made the seven or eight-mile trip to the little settlement to take matters into their own hands.

(Next: Despite attempts at intercession, two San Antonio butchers are lynched after impromptu "trials." Seven hours later, the bodies still sway in the breeze. Twenty-five San Quentin convicts escape under cannon fire and some flee to the redwoods.)

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Installment Six - Redwood Regional Park

With a nocturnal levy of "redwood rangers" on hand for the lynching Lamson wrote, "a number of the most resolute proceeded to the house where the prisoners were confined and, in defiance of the proprietor, who was suspected of being a confederate of the thieves, they rushed into the room and seized one of them whom they hurried away.

"It was a scene of great confusion and terror.

"The guards made a show of resistance but it was only a show. They fired several shots but were careful to elevate their revolvers above the heads of their assailants, their balls lodging in the ceiling; nobody was killed or wounded.

"The affair had doubtless been preconceived between Andrews (the man who lost three oxen) and the party.

"They hastened with the guilty thief to an oak a few rods distant, having at the outset, fastened a rope to his neck."

Interestingly, the two men had two "trials" --one by the Vigilance Committee and one presided over by the "redwood boys." For the Herald wrote that the mob "brought out the prisoners and tried them.

"The proof of their guilt was positive and the sentence of death was pronounced..."

As preparations for the hangings took place, Lamson wrote, "many friends of the thieves gathered around, uttering



threats and denunciations, but a dozen rifles and revolvers were leveled at them and they were intimidated..."

The resourceful editors of the Herald improved upon this account and wrote that "a small party of Frenchmen came down to try to rescue Canu.....but a line was marked out and those who ordered the execution announced that the first men who would step inside of it would be shot down..."

The Herald editors, concerned lest their readers might miss some recherche literary morsel added that "the feet of one of the parties who was hung, were not more than six inches from the ground" and that seven hours later, "the bodies were still dangling from the tree. "

All of which moved the editors of the Alta California, of a more conservative stripe, to observe piously that the men were "doubtless guilty of the crime" but adding:

"In the early daylight, two men were found hanging to a tree with their life choked out of them...In the gray of the morning, a small mob, infuriated by rum, dragged them from their place of confinement and while the surrounding inhabitants were sleeping, hung the criminals like dogs without judge or jury or the show of a trial..."

This was the "noble army of occupation" which the good Bishop Taylor wrote about following his visit to the redwoods in 1849, where he mingled with and preached to the loggers.

No less exciting for the residents of Alameda and Contra Costa counties was the dramatic escape under cannon fire of about 25 convicts from a San Quentin prison camp on the Marin Islands on December 26, 1854. Their heads were half-shaved and they wore

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prison stripes. Some promptly headed for the cimmerian depths of the East Bay redwoods. The rest of the desperate crew made their way north toward Pt. Pinole (now a Regional Park also) passing through San Pablo. One prisoner was shot near there and another lassoed near the San Joaquin Castro ranch. They apparently beached their boat at Pt. Molate.

Lamson jotted down in his journal that "there was a great commotion" in the redwoods on the day following the escape and "the country was aroused by a visit of a swarm of convicts from the state prison.

(Next: More than 100 armed possemen roam the East Bay redwoods seeking 18 San Quentin convicts in prison stripes, with heads half shaved. Prison guards fire grape shot from a cannon at the fleeing felons as they begin their escape by boat.)

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Installment Seven - Redwood Regional Park

Continuing his account of the escape of cutthroat San Quentin convicts under cannon fire, Lamson wrote that "as we sat at our supper, two men came in to warn us that 18 convicts were at Moraga's robbing the house and would doubtless soon be down upon us..."

Moments after, other armed and mounted possemen galloped up to spread the latest alarm: "The convicts had left Moraga's after getting their supper and seizing all the firearms and horses they could find."

By this time, the volunteer possemen in the Redwoods numbered more than 100, armed to the teeth with double-barrelled shotguns, rifles and revolvers.

Among the man-hunters, Lamson recounted, "were several Mexicans who entered into the spirit of the hunt with great zeal. One of these Mexicans, Francisco Moraga, was highly exasperated and cursed the robbers heartily in not very bad English.

"He told me of the robbery of his brother's house and bewailed the loss of a servant boy of his own, an Indian, whom the thieves forced to go with them to act as a guide.

"He had no doubt they would cut his throat and he would never see him again..."

Lamson added that the escaped convicts had "repeatedly turned upon their pursuers, dared them to fight and taunted them with their cowardice..."

The event was a field day for the San Francisco newspapers and, as was customary, each publication had an account, peculiarly unique, for its own readers.

A distillation of these lurid narratives, however, indicated that this was about what happened before the felons found their way into the tenebrous redwood groves:

About 6 a.m. some 60 men who had been quarrying rock on one of the Marin Islands made a rush for a large sloop tied at the wharf, overpowering six guards. About 25 succeeded in getting aboard. The select crew of cutthroats included William ("Cockeyed") Ferry and John Welch "of Vigilance Committee notoriety" both of whom were doing 10 years; Cherokee Bob who was subsequently captured in the Contra Costa hills; and Dr. J. F. Morse "one of the worst rogues that ever escaped the gallows."

As a precaution against too much gunfire, the escaping convicts took a hostage, First Asst. Captain Pullam. Then they clapped on all sail and even rigged oars to speed their escape.

The precaution of taking Captain Pullam hostage was a dismal failure, however.

"The cannon on the hill was manned," the Daily Herald reported "and brought to bear on the departing sloop. Several shots were fired which killed two and wounded two others so badly that their comrades threw them overboard..." A later edition added the interesting intelligence that the guards were using grape shot.

Whether Captain Pullam was wounded by this fusillade or by sharp-shooting guards, the accounts did not say. But they did add that "some of the best marksmen in the state selected their men and made terrible havoc..."

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The guards were about 10 minutes behind the fleeing sloop, pressing the pursuit in a launch and scow, not noted for their fleetness.

The Herald's crime reporter wrote that the forces of law and order "succeeded in cutting the fugitives off from Pt. San Pablo, just above Red Rock Island, and forced them to land on the first point above, on the Contra Costa side."

(Next: The "redwood boys" break into Oakland's wooden jail between 3 and 4 a.m. and seize two men (one of whom was subsequently released) accused of stealing an Alderman's horse. He is hanged from "one of the finest oaks" in Clinton after he refuses to confess. A brave woman editor who calls it murder is denounced.)

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#### Installment Eight - Redwood Regional Park

Before launching into an account of the next lynching engineered by the "redwood rangers," Lamson tied up some loose ends dealing with the escape of the San Quentin convicts and the possemen's search for them in the redwoods.

He recounted that Francisco Moraga's Indian servant returned safely, reporting that the convicts had ridden swiftly during the night, stolen a boat, and made their way to the opposite shore "with the intention, no doubt, of secreting themselves in the Santa Clara redwoods.

"Their retreat was executed with much skill and cunning. They forced their guide to cross the bay with them, though they had no further use for him, and then stole a smaller boat on which they obliged him to re-cross the bay.

"This enabled them to get many miles on their way before the boy could warn the inhabitants." Lamson added a footnote that most of the escaped felons were subsequently recaptured.

The "redwood boys'" next lynching took place on Wednesday, January 31, 1855, when they were credited with breaking into Oakland's rachitic wooden jail between 3 and 4 a.m. and carrying off two alleged horse thieves who were described as "notorious and desperate rascals."

George Sheldon and Bob Parker were arrested for stealing Alderman John Kelsy's valuable horse, and Sheldon was unlucky



enough to be spirited away across the bridge to Clinton where he was hanged from "one of the finest oaks that ornamented that part of town." Parker was later released.

Fate played Sheldon false for he and his confederate had hidden the alderman's horse in a small shanty, and a keen-eared former employee of Kelsey's, riding by, heard "a winnow which sounded to him peculiarly familiar." He dismounted and looked through a crack and, sure enough, there was the alderman's stolen steed.

A pickup posse was rounded up in five minutes, (citizens were more public-spirited then) and well armed, they rode back, concealed their horses, pried a board off the shanty and waited in ambush.

Toward evening, the pair appeared and Sheldon was heard to remark, "we won't take him away until tomorrow."

As they entered, "four revolvers were presented at their heads," and they "were quickly bound and brought to the town jail."

"Great excitement prevailed," the San Francisco Daily Evening News reported and "people collected in large crowds, determined upon summary proceedings.

"A large party, well provided with weapons, arrived from the redwoods."

Justice Marrier, the stories said, held the men to answer and set \$3000 bail but, the San Francisco Daily Herald said "between 3 and 4 o'clock this morning, the staples were forced off the door of the Oakland jail by a party, supposed to be Redwoods men...."

No one except the woman editor of The Contra Costa of Oakland--Mrs. Serena Clarke--learned the details of exactly

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what happened after that, and Mrs. Clarke was denounced for referring to the lynching as "murder."

The Alta California quoted Mrs. Clarke as reporting that a mob of 50 to 75 "redwood boys" prepared to hang Sheldon but gave him an opportunity to confess. He refused.

"The rope," the terror-freighted account said, "was drawn up so that his feet just touched the ground.

"Again he was asked to confess and again he refused.

"Now the mob drew him up so that his toes barely touched the ground. Still he refused to talk.

"The mob, becoming tired of these experiments finally, with a sharp pull, drew him about three feet from the ground and in a few moments he was a corpse."

Just prior to the jail break and lynching, the Daily News was pretty certain what was going to happen and, unwilling to be "scooped" added a paragraph onto its story to this effect:

"Just as the last boat left, the probability was that before this time tomorrow, two more misguided beings will have suffered death for their crimes--under the terrible code of Judge Lynch."

The newspaper business was very competitive.

(Next: A gambler and horse thief becomes the "redwood rangers" lynch victim No. 4. Virtually kidnaped from a boarding house living room, he is strung up by 50 or more bravos from the redwoods area.)

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#### Installment Nine - Redwood Regional Park

Another lynching by the "redwood rangers" was in the offing and later Lamson added his postscript to the hanging of horse thief John Fenning.

Lamson, having been in San Francisco could not provide much detail on this lynching and only remarked that on his return "I was surprised to see scattered around, many of my acquaintances from the Redwoods...But the men were very quiet...though the circumstances looked suspicious.

"The mystery was solved the next day when a notorious horse thief was found hanging to a branch of an oak. The execution was performed in so quiet a manner as not to create the slightest disturbance." Lamson was a devotee of understatement.

The last of the 1854-55 lynchings was headlined by the San Francisco Daily Herald, whose editors evidently were growing a trifle jaded about such affairs, in this manner:

#### Another Lynching at San Antonio More of the Redwood Rangers

In this case, the victim was John Fenning, 21, also known as John Fanning, a breaker of horses. Lamson described him as a gambler and horse thief and "a very bad and malicious fellow who had passed much time in the Redwoods and had been, at times, the cause of great vexation and annoyance to me. He richly merited his punishment but it was, nevertheless, nothing less than a cold-blooded murder..."

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Fenning, who had been boarding with Mrs. Goodell and working for Mr. Wilson in San Antonio kept an appointment with "Judge Lynch" about 10 p.m. Sunday, July 1, 1855.

Mr. Friedlander of the well-known Mansion House, which seemed to be the epicenter of all the impromptu gallows gossip said he'd heard the night's work was accomplished "by a company of Redwood Rangers," and gave this account:

Fenning was seated in the Goodell home when a tall man entered and asked whether he and seven companions could be accommodated there.

Mrs. Goodell said yes and soon, the tall man reappeared with 10 to 15 other men. The tall man winked meaningly at Fenning and beckoned for him to follow.

"Scarcely a word was spoken," Friedlander said, "and the tall man was heard to exclaim 'all aboard' and immediately, the whole party was in motion."

When the group had covered about 50 yards, it was joined by 40 others and, it was afterwards learned, they proceeded to the "Frenchmen's Slaughterhouse" where two Frenchmen had been hanged the year before, and strung up Fenning from an oak at the head of a dry creek.

Only the man's hat was found at first, but at 5 p.m. on Monday, the body was found, "nearly concealed from view. The people of San Antonio are in a high state of excitement and denounce the deed with one accord as a fiendish murder."

Fenning, the story went, had threatened to set fire to the home of a Mr. Walker and when the home burned down suspicion focused on him.

"On this hint," the Alta California reported, "he had been watched and when some horses were stolen from some redwood choppers in the mountains, Fenning, being regarded as a suspicious character, was selected as the culprit."

(Next: Some 250 armed "redwood rangers" march down out of their mountain abodes into Oakland, threatening to "reduce the town to ashes" unless a deputy pound master, who is alleged to have cheated one of the redwood forest residents, is delivered into their hands. Only the personal intervention of the mayor dissuades them.)

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Installment Ten - Redwood Regional Park

A near-lynching was also laid at the forest doorstep of the "redwoodites" when on Monday, September 4, 1854, "some 250 Americans from the redwoods marched into Oakland with the avowed purpose of arresting and inflicting summary punishment upon one D. C. Porter, a deputy pound keeper..."

The San Francisco Daily Evening News, which liked to keep such items churning along at a hellish pace, headlined the item, "Mob Law in Contra Costa. Threats to Destroy Oakland."

The story highlighted the fact that "today a note was sent to the Mayor of Oakland (Horace Carpentier) notifying him that if Porter, the acting pound keeper, was not delivered up in 24 hours, the town would be reduced to ashes. The mob appears greatly exasperated and seems determined to accomplish the object for which they assembled."

Very briefly, "Doctor" Porter was alleged to have taken in stray cattle at the pound; advertised them in perfunctory fashion; and then sold them to cronies at about one-tenth their value.

"Word was brought to the Redwoods," Lamson dutifully wrote in his journal "that a poor man had been robbed in Oakland of some oxen through the rascality and villainy of some officials of that city. A company quickly assembled and marched down to the city.....

"They had not forgotten the threats of the Oaklanders to hang them and were determined to put their courage to the test and 'beard the lion in his den.'"

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One of the alleged victims was Mill Owner Hiram Thorne, who by no stretch of the imagination could have been called "poor" despite Lamson's description.

"Meanwhile," Lamson continued, "many of the redwood residents paraded through the streets uttering defiance to the citizens.

"'Here is a target,'" said a brawny Kentuckian (Abe Currie, who Lamson described as "a very coarse-looking fellow with a dark complexion and a black, bushy beard that more than half covered his face, which perhaps had never felt a razor, and gave a peculiar grimness to his rough, harsh features") "and he strode along with a rusty rifle on his shoulder and struck his breast with his sledge-hammer fist.

"'Here is a target for the Oakland sharpshooters. Let them try it if they dare.'

"'I'm from the Redwoods' rang out the voice of another. 'Where is your Oakland company to hang me?'

"'What are you after,' asked a spectator of one of the 'boys'?

"'Justice' he replied.

"'How are you going to obtain it'?

"'By the halter if the money isn't paid over pretty soon'" the man replied with an oath.

"The affair was reaching a crisis," Lamson continued. "The clamors and shouts of the mob reached the mayor's ears and he found it necessary to acknowledge that the acts of the officer were illegal, that the city was liable for the value of the cattle and, in order to appease the excited mob, he pledged his individual word for payment of the money.

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"The affair thus ended and the party returned triumphantly to their homes in the redwoods."

(Next: From lynching to piety. Pioneering Methodist Minister William Taylor comes to the East Bay redwoods to cut timbers for his rectory and discovers the crude graves of two '49 Argonauts. They sleep on in what is now Redwood Regional Park.)

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### Installment Eleven - Redwood Regional Park

The editors of the San Francisco Daily Evening News who evidently relished the story and were unwilling to drop the matter of the threat of "mob law" in Oakland, until they published a final installment, wrote:

"The greatest excitement continues to prevail on the other side of the bay relative to cattle thieves.

"Porter, a deputy pound keeper is said, to have connived with cattle thieves for some months past, under cover of his official duty, by receiving their plunder in the pound and afterwards, selling to interested parties for sums merely nominal though sufficient, it was thought, to secure the color and protection of the law.

"On Sunday before last, three oxen were stolen and placed in the pound and the Thursday following, sold by Porter to a man named Hessington for \$12 each which was about one-tenth of their actual value..."

The San Francisco Herald chimed in that it had "heard rumors of the prevalence of mob law and destroying the place."

The illicit activities of these less diligent servants of the Lord contrasted sharply with the God-fearing excursion into the redwoods, in search of lumber to build a parsonage, of pioneering Methodist Minister William Taylor on October 10, 1849.

He was the man who wrote of the two 1849 grave markers he saw on a Sunday when he ascended a slight rise. They still exist in Redwood Regional Park today, not far from Redwood Peak.



A six-footer, the famed San Francisco street preacher had a legendary "courage like a lion" and he needed it to invade the godless redwoods.

Accompanied by Brother Alexander Hatler, recently arrived from Missouri and Father Asa White and some of his family, who owned a shanty in the redwoods, the party headed for the Contra Costa shore in a whaleboat.

Neither the Reverend Mr. Taylor nor his infant Powell Street church which he had founded, could afford the \$400 a month rent he was paying for a five-room house, so he decided to cut the lumber himself and build a two-story parsonage.

"I said to the brethern," the early-day California Methodist wrote, "that if nothing better opened, I would take my wedge and go to the redwoods, 15 miles distant across the bay and get out the lumber for a house and build it myself...and leave the result to the Lord."

Cutting, splitting and sawing redwood was tougher, the preacher discovered, than composing and delivering the Sunday sermon. He and Hatler started out briskly on a log some woodsmen had abandoned, driving their wedges into it but they found they could not split it and it was noontime before they succeeded in chopping their wedges out. On the following day, they started work on an unusually large log, boring a hole in it and splitting it with a charge of powder. The wood was too cross-grained for their purpose.

The next week Hatler could not accompany him and "I had to depend on my own muscles and skill alone."

Ultimately, the clergyman turned to the lighter work of splitting shingles and traded 3,000 of them to a man operating a saw pit for 24 joists, 17 feet long.

For those who are not familiar with the 1849-era saw pits, here is a description:

The pit was from 16 to 24 feet long. Across it were placed two timbers, 10 to 12 inches in diameter. On these, and over the pit, the log to be sawn was placed after being hewn square with an ax.

Then two hardy, perspiring men, one standing on the log and the other standing in the pit, propelled the whipsaw up and down, cutting the log into boards. Some 200 board feet of lumber could be produced in a day through sheer muscle power.

(Next: Pioneering Methodist Minister William Taylor, who was later to become a Bishop, ascends a hill in what is now Redwood Regional Park on a Sunday morning and discerns the rude graves of two '49ers. The graves still exist in the park.)

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Installment Twelve - Redwood Regional Park

The Christian ministrations of the Rev. William Taylor in the sinful and wicked precincts of the East Bay Redwoods were the occasion for entries in the good pastor's journal.

On Friday, October 19, the Reverend Mr. Taylor recalled he "went to a woodman's tent to sharpen my draw knife and found there a man by the name of Haley, very gone with diarrhea...I prayed with him and he told me 'My soul is happy; I am not afraid to die now'...

"I believe this was the first man I was permitted to lead to Jesus in California." Three years later, he met the man in San Francisco, very much alive.

"Sunday morning, October 21, 1849, for retirement and meditation," the Reverend Mr. Taylor wrote, "I have strolled out to the top of a high hill, the sky is clear as crystal and the sun is shining with a California radiance unknown in other lands...

"Looking eastward, I see a dense forest of huge redwood timber; doubtless the veritable Cedars of Lebanon.

"West and north, hills and mountains stretch to the uttermost line of the ken of vision and the scene, in its barrenness and sterility of appearance, is only relieved here and there by a small oasis and by the herds of cattle feeding on the dry grass.

"Southward, the whole valley for 50 miles is filled with fog. It looks as though a firmament of white broken clouds had dropped from the heavens and settled over the whole region of the Bay of San Francisco and its adjacent vales.

more--



"A little to my right are two graves.

"There sleep the dust and buried hopes of two California adventurers.

"Whence were they? What their names? Who are their parents?

"Do they yet live to inquire after their sons in the Far West?

"What was the character of these sons?

"What the circumstances of their deaths?

"Where now are their souls?

"These are questions which arise in my mind but no voice responds.

"This is a lonely, solemn place.

"Its loneliness is increased by the numerous vultures which are floating in the air over my head and the hoarse croaking of the raven..."

There, apparently, the remains of the two unheralded Argonauts slept undisturbed for 103 years in what is now the Redwood Regional park archery range until Wilfred West of Oakland, overshot a straw target and lost his arrow in the underbrush in September, 1952.

In looking for the arrow, West and a companion, Ray Morrison, stumbled on to the very same grave markers the Reverend Mr. Taylor had observed when he stood on the hill on that October day in 1849. He had failed to make note of the names.

But the inscription on one was still quite plain--"A. R. Andersen, Died May 7, 1849." The letters are about 2 inches high beneath a cross. The second grave, like the first, is marked by a huge

sandstone boulder, perhaps 600 pounds in weight. But its inscription is almost obliterated except for a few letters which might be "Eric."

Two University of California archaeologists, in 1952, agreed the lettering appeared to be genuine because of its obvious age and the simplicity of the markings. The sandstone is weatherbeaten and moss and lichen cover it.

(Next: The incredibly large coast redwood, 33-1/2 feet in diameter, which was situated in what is now Redwood Regional Park and was used as a sighting point as skippers of square riggers conned their craft through the Golden Gate. Oath-bawling bullwhackers whip ox teams mercilessly with lashes 12 to 20 feet long and "the report of their whips resounds through the canyon like...musketry." )

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#### Installment Thirteen - Redwood Regional Park

The hollow stump of the incredibly large Coast Redwood, 33-1/2 feet in diameter, was discovered in 1855 by Dr. Gibbons, respected Alameda physician and botanist and he also made reference to a "prodigious triple trunk" which aggregated 57 feet in diameter. His description places both on or near the summit of 1619-foot Redwood Peak which is now within the boundaries of the park. Ironically, from the very first day Dr. Gibbons, who was one of the founders of the California Academy of Sciences, set eyes on the redwood forest in the East Bay hills, he never ceased his efforts to establish a park there.

He brought men like John Muir, his close friend, and a distinguished tally of others equally famous, to the "ruins of this forest" to partake of basket lunches in the hollow tree stump which he referred to as a "wonderful reception hall prepared by nature."

It is possible that Lamson saw the prodigious specimen before it was felled or was familiar with the stump, for he twice hinted at it when he wrote:

"I have seen the hollow stump of a tree in which several men encamped for six or eight months...I have seen some of the largest and tallest trees, they having been felled before I arrived here."

The paths of Dr. Gibbons, who arrived in California in January, 1853, and Lamson, who sailed through the Golden Gate about four months earlier, may have crossed in the redwoods. Both had botanic training. But nothing in their writings alludes to it.

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Dr. Gibbons was, for 20 years, Chairman of the Committee on Botany of the California State Medical Society and wrote an article about the East Bay redwoods for a University of California botany journal.

The inexhaustible resources of profanity and thirst of the ox team bullwhackers in the East Bay redwood forests and their "barbarous cruelty" evidently filled Lamson with dismay and he drew censorious comparisons between them and the "downeast" lumbermen of Maine. Their fragrant unabashed alcoholism, and the idioms in the lexicon of blasphemy they employed would shrivel the soul, he apparently feared.

"To a man accustomed to the mode of teaming in Maine," Lamson wrote, "the manner of driving oxen in California is a matter of much curiosity. A great portion of the teamsters that I have seen are from the Western states.

"These men use a whip made of strips of green hide braided into an immense thong, attached to a rough handle with the bark on.

"These whips, lash and staff, vary in length from 12 to 20 feet.

"The drivers have the art of cracking them with a report, I have never heard equaled by a stage driver and when half a dozen of them are driving their teams over a bad road, the report of their whips resounds through the canyon like an irregular discharge of musketry."

"They are cruel instruments of torture and are used without mercy.

"But the drivers do not confine themselves to the use of the lash alone. Whenever that does not succeed in making the

oxen draw the load, they belabor them with the heavy butt end of the handle while the poor beasts writhe and bellow under the torture.

"I have seldom witnessed such barbarous cruelty or such a total absence of skill in driving. A teamster on the Penobscot or Kennebec (both rivers in Maine) with the same team would draw a load of double the weight and without injury to the cattle.

"Many of them have never seen a goad used.

"They (the redwoods bullwhackers) have heard that the Yankees drive with a long stick with a wire in the end of it but it would be useless to try to convince them that such a mode is preferable to their clumsy, awkward way.

(Next: Lamson slyly admires the "beauty of the oaths" of the bullwhackers in the redwoods "and the skill with which they use them;" stigmatizes the natives of Pike County, Mo.; and writes of flights of 50 Condors (now almost extinct) over the redwood forests.)

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Phone: 531-9300  
Monte Monteagle

Installment Fourteen - Redwood Regional Park

Continuing his discussion of the hard-drinking, oath-bawling ox team bullwhackers in the East Bay redwoods, Lamson observed:

"The names they give their oxen have rather an amusing sound to an Easterner's ear.

"They frequently honor them with the Christian names of their friends and acquaintances though often, as with us, some peculiarity of the ox suggests the name.

"I have smiled to hear them, with great earnestness, call out, 'whoa, haw there, Yaller Cat; Come up Nigger; Haw Joshua; Gee Bill' and with like orders to Jerry, Dick, Ben, Sam, Tony and Paddy. (Ox teams might number as many as eight, 10 or 14 animals.)

"These fellows are charming proficient in the art of swearing, and the beauty of their oaths and the skill with which they use them would make a Penobscot lumberman blush at his ignorance of this interesting accomplishment.

"Many of these men are from Pike County, Mo., a place which has sent out such a multitude of rude, uncultivated men that it has become a proverb and byword throughout California.

"If you would insult a man, ask him if he is from Pike county. If you see a man particularly green and clownish, he is from Pike county.

"Pike is an unfortunate name here, for often, instead of charging a man with being a native Pike county, he is merely called 'Pike.'"



Although today's rare California Condor, high on the endangered species list and the largest flying bird in North America, was often interchangeably referred to as a turkey buzzard or vulture in the gold rush days, Lamson not only examined and measured them but assigned them their proper Latin name for that time, Sarcoramphus californicus. Over the years, the name has been changed to Sarcoramphus gymnogyps.

He tells of buying a specimen from Currie, the Kentucky rifleman, "a gruff old savage," for "five bits" (62-1/2 cents). Its wing span, he said, was nine feet four inches and it was three feet 11 inches from the tip of the bill to the end of the tail. Later, he recounted, he measured a feather that was 26-1/2 inches long.

Lamson was an amateur ornithologist and his journal is liberally laced with his observations on birds of the region.

"During my sojourn in these forests," Lamson wrote, "I had many opportunities of becoming acquainted with the habits and characteristics of the California vulture or Condor (Sarcoramphus californicus). I studied them with some interest and though the little, perhaps trifling, anecdotes I shall relate, will not be of enough value to the scientific reader, they may serve to amuse such as have no special taste for the science of ornithology.

"A scattering flock of more than 50 California vultures (Condors) flew over the forest in the morning, seeing them sail past in greater numbers than I had before observed them.

"In a few moments, I counted 25 while those that preceded them and those that followed all within an hour, must have exceeded that number.

*more--*

"They sometimes fly in large flocks. I counted one morning, upwards of 50 that flew over the mountains, all in one direction, within an hour..."

Lamson casually mentioned that on September 30, 1854, "a teamster brought me a live California vulture. It had gorged itself upon the carcass of a cow until it was unable to fly though it ran with considerable fleetness and was lassoed by a Mexican..."

About a month later, Lamson laconically recorded that "on November 2, my vulture died. It was probably wounded in being captured."

"Until the invasion of these forests by the Americans, they must have been a very secure haunt for these monster birds."

But he added that with the advent of the army of loggers, "a very considerable number of them (Condors) have been shot in these forests and the sportsman finds no difficulty in getting within rifle or gun shot of them."

Adding credence to Lamson's account was an article in an 1854 issue of Hutching's magazine by Alex S. Taylor entitled "The Great Condor of California" in which he related that a Condor with an 11-foot wingspread had been shot at Carmel Bay in Monterey County.

(Next: "Hannah, the Kanaka lady," a cigar-smoking 18-year-old child bride, rides through the redwoods attired in a long, blue calico dress and narrow-brimmed man's straw hat; she is "grossly vulgar and profane" and her husband, "Kanaka Joe", flogs her occasionally.)

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Installment Fifteen - Redwood Regional Park

Discoursing further on the subject of the California Condor, Lamson told how Currie, the man who sold him a specimen, stunned one of the birds in shooting it and "tied it to a stake but it escaped..."

Continuing, Lamson wrote, "a very considerable number of them (Condors) have been shot in these forests and the sportsman finds no difficulty in getting within rifle or gunshot of them.

"A flock of four of them perched in a tree shading my cabin. Three only, flew away at the first discharge of a rifle while the fourth continued on its perch until a second shot was fired at it.

"Flocks of California vultures, sometimes a dozen in number, are often seen floating high above the mountains and sailing gracefully around in circles, as we often see eagles, without the slightest motion of the wings.

"I have seen them on a foggy morning sitting upon the branches or the broken tops of a tree where they had roosted during the night and quite indifferent to my approach until, by considerable shouting, I succeeded in arousing them.

"Then, after slowly spreading their wings and giving three or four lazy flaps as if to see that they were in proper condition to use, they quietly glided from their perch and swept away as easily as if they had been but gossamers floating in the air..."

Providing a touch of forest burlesque was "Hannah, the Kanaka lady," cigar-smoking 18-year-old child bride, "grossly



vulgar and profane" who rode through the Redwoods attired in a long blue calico dress, narrow-brimmed man's straw hat, tied with string under her chin and a woollen jacket owned by her husband, "Kanaka Joe Tracy."

"I have received frequent visits from a Kanaka lady at my cabin--the only one with whom I am acquainted," Lamson observed. "The name Kanaka, as the reader perhaps knows, is applied to the natives of the Sandwich Island (later Hawaii).

"She is short and thick with a complexion darker than that of our Indians, has a broad nose and a wide mouth.....

"She is kind and affectionate, very lively and excitable, quick and passionate, simple and guileless. She is a simple-minded child of nature, and I am often amused by her childlike talk.

"This woman is called Hannah; is 18 years of age; was married five years ago to a Yankee sailor and left her native land for a home in California.

"Her mind is uncultivated and she is grossly vulgar and profane. She is very temperate, drinking no strong liquors, but smokes cigars. She is honest and trustworthy, faithful to discharge all debts she may contract and fulfills all her engagements. She is said to be a fair sample of a female Sandwich Islander.

"Her husband, Joe Tracy, or, more familiarly, 'Kanaka Joe,' is a sailor from Maine; a still, quiet peaceable fellow though quick to resent an insult and can fight beautifully whenever the occasion requires. He has a sailor's high notions of honor and a sailor's deep passion for drink.

"He has a literary turn of mind and drinks deeply into the yellow-covered publications (Dime novels?). He talks wisely

of books; philosophics, learnedly; and betrays a very exalted opinion of his own literary taste and scientific attainments.

"Joe is very fond of his Kanaka wife though he flogs her occasionally in the heat of passion and repents of it as soon as his temper subsides."

(Next: Ham-fisted Parson Brown from the redwoods, who believed in the tenet of an "eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth" floors a man with one blow who annoys him by trying to cadge a drink on the trans-bay boat; 1500-pound Grizzlies in the redwoods bring \$1 a pound at the butcher shop).

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Installment Sixteen - Redwood Regional Park

The redwoods, obviously, were not a strongly Sabbattarian community and Parson Brown, a close friend of Lamson's, "though a preacher of the gospel of peace, was not altogether devoid of a degree of spirit that prompted him to defend himself..." He rode a mule, worked in the woods during the week and preached the gospel on Sundays in the redwood groves where the sun's rays slanted down through the centuries-old tree-top clerestory.

"The redwoods," Lamson wrote in a philosophic vein, "contained a variety of characters, good, bad and indifferent.

"Parson Brown belonged to the first of these classes.

"He was a Missourian and occupied the week splitting posts, rails, pickets and shingles and the Sabbath in preaching...

"He did not consider the precept 'whosoever shall smite thee on the right cheek, turn to him the other also,' as applicable to this particular portion of the universe but that 'an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth' was the only rule which would carry the most quiet man safely through the scenes of turbulence and violence he had encountered here.

"Despite his peculiarities, he was, on the whole, a very good sort of man. Perhaps it was these very peculiarities to which I refer, that rendered him popular and it may be, in some slight degree, useful, in the community in which he was placed.

more--



"He was a 'Campbellite' or, as he termed himself, a 'Christian' preacher. He was also a very industrious and hard-working man, one of the sturdiest men in the redwoods.

"He (Parson Brown) had been to the city and on his return across the bay as he sat quietly reading in the cabin of the boat, he was accosted by a rowdy who asked him for a treat.

"The parson refused and moved to another seat. The fellow followed him, determined to have either a treat or a quarrel. He put his arm around the parson's neck and the parson thrust it away, whereupon he struck him a blow on the face which caused the blood to flow.

"The good man's patience was now exhausted and he arose quickly and dealt the fellow a blow with his brawny fist that laid him sprawling upon the floor.

"He then raised his foot to stomp on him but the shrieks of a woman who sat near the prostrate man caused him to desist and the scoundrel, slowly gathering himself up, sneaked away without daring to renew the quarrel.

"He had caught a Tartar.

"This little affair very naturally increased the parson's popularity in the redwoods and he was highly applauded for the spirit he had manifested on the occasion."

Tales of mountain lions and 1500-pound grizzlies which today would congeal the marrow of timid listeners were so commonplace in the redwoods that the only reaction among the residents might be to re-check the ammunition supply.

Lamson wrote about the redwoods in one of his letters to his daughter in far-off Maine alluding to "the inaccessible depths of wild and luxurious forests, the abode of Grizzly Bears (*Ursus horribilis*) and the California lion...

"The redwoods have long been famous as a resort of grizzly bears and though numbers of them have been killed there are still some remaining as the farmers well know from the depredations they commit among their stock....."

Writing from the coign of vantage of 1854, Lamson alluded to "the early days of California" when "bear meat was sometimes sold at \$1 a pound. A man who could kill a grizzly weighing 1,000 or 1500 pounds would make a very fair day's work of it."

(Next: The cry of the California Mountain Lion in the East Bay redwoods "was the cry of a hundred cats as big as oxen...different from that of any other animal...and impossible to describe"; Grizzly Bears prowl around the loggers' shacks, attracted by the smell of food; in nocturnal forays they kill cows, hogs and oxen; and they instill fear into the hearts of youngsters bound on huckleberry-gathering expeditions.)

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Installment Seventeen - Redwood Regional Park

Joseph Lamson, the East Bay redwoods faithful diarist, recalled that upon returning to the redwoods with provisions, "I was told that two California Lions had serenaded the canyon with a specimen of their 'music' on the last night.

"It was a sound to excite terror in the hearts of the hearers and the inmates of the camp acknowledged that they were frightened.

"It was not the roaring of the lions but the growling of the cats, loud and deep.

"Benjamin Wakefield said, 'it was the cry of a hundred cats as big as oxen.'

"I was sorry to have missed the opportunity of hearing it."

Lamson went on to describe two mountain lions he did hear on October 15, 1853.

"A pair of California lions," he wrote, "gave us another 'concert' in the night. I lay awake and heard them, and all the other inmates of my camp and every other camp in the canyon were awakened by the noise.

"Their cry was different from that of any other animal I ever heard and it is impossible to describe it.

"Their cry was a wild, loud, very clear, smooth and prolonged yell or howl. The animals were very near at first but



they hastened away over the hills and as they went, every successive cry grew fainter and fainter 'till we ceased to hear them..."

On one of his tramps, Lamson told of visiting the San Ramon Valley ranch of John ("Scotch") Smith who had a "Grizzly Bear chained to an oak at the rear of his house." The ranch was situated eight miles from Mt. Diablo, he said.

A grizzly sniffing around your front door in the East Bay redwoods in 1853-54 was about as commonplace as hearing the neighborhood poodle or cat today.

"An animal of large size," Lamson scribbled "was heard prowling around our camps last night. He snuffed at the door of Isaiah Wilcox and Thompson's cabin, attracted, no doubt, by the smell of provisions.

"Thompson was awakened by him and got up and gave him a salute with his rifle which caused him to retreat.

"From the sound of his step and the crackling of the bushes through which he walked, they judged him to be a Grizzly...

"Some neighbors of ours, a mile distant, were alarmed in the night by an unusual commotion and bellowing among their cattle and on rushing out with their dogs, they found a large ox bleeding from wounds given it by a Grizzly.

"The bear made its escape in the darkness and they scarcely had a glimpse of him. The ox, though badly torn, recovered from its wounds. Its owner was Isaac W. Gann, a brother of Andrew Jackson Gann whose cow was killed by a Grizzly on the night of June 18.

"These little incidents do not deter the women and children from gathering berries in the thickets on the mountains and in the valleys, the retreats of these dreaded animals....."

Lamson then recounts how he and "Mr. Sage, the schoolmaster" provided an armed escort for Parson Brown's wife, her two children, and about 15 others "when they rode up a mountain to gather huckleberries.

"As this mountain was known to be frequented by grizzlies, Mrs. Brown was rather desirous of having a guard in case of attack....."

As a footnote to history, Pedagogue Sage taught in the Willow Spring school in Moraga and Parson Brown used the same facilities for his Sunday sermons and orisons. The mountain, favored by both huckleberries and grizzlies was Knobcone Pine Ridge above Indian Valley.

"It was not our fortune--or misfortune," Lamson continued, "to encounter a grizzly, though there was more than one there at the time as we afterward found, for on the succeeding night, one came down and destroyed a sow and several pigs at the foot of the mountain, belonging to Isaac Johns. Another attacked and wounded a hog at Jackson Gann's and a third killed a hog two miles distant belonging to Gibson.

"Grizzlies are very prone to resent an insult and to turn upon their pursuers.

"Our party concluded to forego the pleasure of berry picking during the remainder of the season."

(Next: Lamson provides a vivid gold rush era vignette of youthful Mexican gallants and their sweethearts at San Antonio landing on a Sunday morning. It's a tale of silver-mounted saddles, spirited horses and elegantly-attired girls.)

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Installment Eighteen - Redwood Regional Park

In his episodic account, Lamson often referred to the Mexican inhabitants of the region and telling of one of his tedious trudges up the dusty East Oakland hills to the redwoods, Lamson wrote:

"I met several men with teams of oxen bringing loads of wood, shingles and boards from the mountains.

"At one time, a Mexican on horseback came dashing down the mountainside at a speed which few but a Mexican would dare to risk..."

He then proceeded to give a charming and colorful account--a profile of the California gold rush yesterdays--of mounted Mexican gallants and their sweethearts.

Dated August 14, 1853, Lamson's journal entry went like this:

"I went to San Francisco today, it being Sunday.

"I found a considerable concourse of pleasure-seeking people, male and female, at San Antonio.

"Among them were a number of well-dressed Mexican girls on horseback accompanied by their brothers or gallants.

"They stopped at a large hotel for refreshments and attracted much attention from a crowd of idlers.

"They were richly dressed and wore a peculiar fur-riding hat and veil. Their horses were handsomely caparisoned and the side saddles were of the most fashionable description.



"Among the gentlemen was a handsome boy of about 16 who rode a young, spirited horse, covered with a rich silver-mounted black saddle--such a one as I would like to send home were I able--and with bridle and stirrups to correspond.

"When the ladies mounted their horses, they placed their foot in the gentleman's hand which he held down for the purpose, and then, with a nimble spring, bounded very gracefully into their saddles. This is an old Spanish custom and it was Delano, I think (Alonzo Delano, early California author and illustrator) who spoke of his awkwardness in trying to assist a lady to mount a horse in this manner...

"When they were ready, the ladies, six or seven in number, started off at a brisk gallop in true Mexican style and it seemed to me that they intended to dispense with any further services from their gallants, but they better knew the speed of Mexican horses than I did.

"Presently, the handsome boy with the handsome and richly caparisoned horse started in chase and, giving loose rein to his stud, off he went with the fleetness of a bird and, no doubt, soon overtook the pretty brunettes.

"The other beaux, though in no apparent haste to start, went off at the same speed..."

Lamson's strange ophidian attachment caused him to become a purchaser of rattlesnakes and when "two or three old drunkards" barbecued his pets, he in effect, pronounced a curse and "earnestly prayed that the ghosts of those murdered innocents might haunt their destroyers..."

He dwelt at some length on a specimen he bought from "Crowfoot" observing:

*more--*

"He caught it at the risk of his life and had put it in a bottle. The snake tried repeatedly to bite him while he handled it with his naked hands and he narrowly escaped its fangs.

"It was a large snake and had eight rattles..."

Only about a month later, "Crowfoot" who knew a good, if eccentric customer when he saw one, captured another rattler and caged it in an oyster can, selling it to Lamson, the redwood's snake fancier, for \$1.50.

(Next: Three drunkards barbecue Lamson's pet rattlesnakes alive and the redwoods diarist "earnestly prays" that their ghosts will "haunt their destroyers in every fit of delirium tremens." An 1853 tale of an Oakland balloon ascension with an untutored boy as passenger on a narrow strip of board. Ecumenicism comes to a Sunday service under the redwoods.)

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Installment Nineteen - Redwood Regional Park

"On my return home from San Francisco where I made a short visit," Lamson recounted with some rancor, "I found that my store and room had been broken open by John R. Allen, who, getting beastly drunk with two or three other old drunkards, took my rattlesnakes to a fire they had kindled for the occasion and, with mock solemnity, made a burnt offering of them.

"They continued to drink after the exploit until Allen ended his orgy in delirium tremens.

"It may, perhaps, excite a smile when I say that I had acquired a degree of affection for the reptiles. They had become my pets and I felt sort of companionship in them...

"The slaying of my pets was of much vexation to me and I earnestly prayed that the ghosts of those murdered innocents might haunt their destroyers in every fit of delirium tremens which they should bring upon themselves to the end of their worthless lives."

Extolling the virtues of the rattler, Lamson told how two he had caged "never quarreled. Place two foxes in a cage and they will fight from day to day until one or the other is killed and even two birds...will destroy each other when confined together.

"But here was an instance of perfect harmony..."

Illustrating the cheapness of life and casualness of the times, Lamson wrote of an 1853 Oakland balloon ascension in which a boy sailed off high over the redwoods "before directions could be given him how to descend..."

*more--*



"The balloon ascension was a badly managed affair," Lamson continued, in a masterpiece of understatement. "The balloon could not be sufficiently inflated to take up a man and the car so the car was detached and a narrow strip of board suspended in its place.

"A boy placed himself astride the board and before directions could be given him how to descend, he was rising high in the air and sailing in the direction of the mountains.

"From accounts I received, I think his course must have carried him nearly directly over my cabin.

"He was speedily out of sight and it was universally believed that he must perish.

"But in the defiance of this opinion, he was brought back to his home in San Francisco a day or two after having safely landed about a dozen miles beyond Benicia in the Suisun Valley after a pleasant trip of 40 or 50 miles..."

In the fall of 1855, the Indian Summer of the redwoods which were fast disappearing, Lamson decided to attend a "Methodist Camp meeting at the old camping ground" about five miles from his cabin.

It was an unlikely congregation of case-hardened, boozy communicants that gathered under the redwoods but there were early but faltering signs of rural ecumenicism which warmed Lamson's heart, impelling him to write:

"The services did not vary much from those in New England. But a little incident occurred of such a novel character and so singularly beautiful that I record it for the benefit of Christians in other portions of the country.

(Next: Christian fellowship and a sharing of the collection under the redwoods by the Methodists and Presbyterians. Lamson is gratified by this show of brotherhood but when a Mississippi tosspot, prejudiced against Yankees, passes the hat, Lamson's charitable instincts wither.)

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Installment Twenty - Redwood Regional Park

Setting the scene for a simple church meeting under the East Bay redwoods for unlettered loggers in the 1850's, Lamson writes:

"At the taking of the collection, the Reverend Mr. Fulton made a statement which shows the harmonious feeling that existed between the Methodists and Presbyterians.

"At the last Presbyterian camp meeting," Lamson quoted the Methodist presiding elder, "the collection taken for the support of the ministry was, most unexpectedly, to me, divided between all of us who had taken part in the services.

"Such an act, the first of a similar kind I have ever known, was as gratifying as it was unexpected and most happy am I to say that we have, this day, an opportunity to reciprocate the favor by sharing with the brethren of that denomination, now present, the collection to which we invite you to contribute."

While this touching scene of pietistic harmony and accord under the redwoods moved Lamson mightily, the appearance of a tosspot who was assisting in taking the collection caused him to withhold his offering.

"After such an exhibition of Christian fellowship and friendly feeling," the redwoods diarist wrote at the outset, "could anyone fail to cast in his mite?

"The collectors were designated by the preachers and had prepared their hats by placing a handkerchief in them.

"My piece of coin was already between my thumb and finger when I saw a man approaching with his hat, whose appearance somewhat neutralized the effect which the eloquence of the preacher might have had on me.

"I knew him well.

"His name was Davis. He had come from Mississippi, brimful of prejudices against the Yankees, of whose character, he was most profoundly ignorant but whom he never omitted an opportunity to traduce.

"His face was profusely ornamented with 'whisky blossoms' and I believe he worshipped the bottle with a more ardent devotion than his God.

"He was notoriously dishonest and seldom paid a debt unless compelled by process of law.

"As he approached me, my fingers almost unconsciously relaxed their grip on the piece of money between them and it dropped to the bottom of my pocket.

"The man passed on and the collection was not swelled by the addition of my offering of that day..."

Nevertheless, despite Lamson's unwillingness to contribute, the effect of the Reverend Mr. Fulton's homily was salutary and "was manifested by the jingling of the coin that was poured into the hats from many quarters of the field..." Very likely, that 1855 collection, contributed by the hard-working, low-paid loggers, contained its quota of half cents, three-cent silver pieces and half dimes, current at the time and, perchance, even a gold dollar or quarter eagle from the more affluent.

Lamson's account is liberally laced with descriptions of the East Bay and its hills of more than a century ago and



he tells of making the laborious ascent on foot to the redwoods and looking back to see "the houses of San Antonio in full sight and Oakland, though nearly buried in its groves of oaks, was distinctly visible..."

Later, he recalls returning from San Francisco and upon debarking "I met a drove of sheep and goats, 3,000 in number, on the plains of San Antonio.

"They had been driven from Chihuahua and the drove originally consisted of 5,000, two fifths of which had died on their long journey..." He added that they sold at \$7 a head and retailed at \$14 or \$15.

(Next: Patches of California poppies can be descried in the East Bay hills from mid-bay, eight or 10 miles away; a bag of 70 blackbirds in two hours; who were some of the distinguished men who got their start in the East Bay redwoods?)

##### 12-76

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Installment Twenty-One - Redwood Regional Park

Wildflowers literally glutted the East Bay hills and on a trip back from San Francisco, Lamson remarked that huge patches of California poppies could be discerned there from a distance of eight or 10 miles. On another occasion, Wakefield, knowing his interest in botany, brought him a Tiger Lily which measured eight feet, eight inches long.

Game was plentiful and besides bear meat and venison, the loggers often dined on quail, dove and blackbirds.

Market hunters and soldiers from the Presidio often invaded the redwoods to hunt bear, deer, elk, rabbit, squirrels, quail and dove and there were mountain lions too for trophy seekers.

While Lamson was not a marksman and seldom hunted, the very abundance of game tempted him from time to time and he related that he borrowed Parson Brown's gun "which he calls a 'yanger'--a piece answering equally well both for a shotgun and rifle--and in two or three hours shot about 70 red-winged blackbirds."

On the following day, he added, he shot 60 blackbirds in the morning, bringing down 15 at one shot.

On another occasion, he recalled shooting two turtle doves for a stew--"they are esteemed a great delicacy and sell readily at \$6 a dozen in the cities." As an aside, he remarked that after cleaning the birds, he "took the little black seed out of their crops" and mailed them to his daughter.

*more--*

It is interesting to speculate upon what flower, plant, tree or shrub may have emerged from the rocky soil of far-off Maine, germinated from small black seeds, once in the crop of a dove which made its home in the East Bay redwoods.

Lamson also observed that in June, 1854, while crossing the toll bridge between Clinton and Oakland, "I saw the toll keeper skinning a seal which he had just shot from the bridge. Seals are rather numerous in the bay."

Visiting in Marysville in 1855, Lamson recalls that Mrs. Post "gave us a Sandhill Crane for dinner. Never having eaten one of these birds, I had considerable curiosity to try it and was pleased to find it very palatable, sweet and fine flavored."

Who were some of the famous men who played a part in the logging off of the East Bay redwoods, either directly or indirectly, over the years? What names in the realm of science and letters added lustre to the wooded enclave?

There was Capt. John Augustus Sutter, that tragic California pioneer and good host who lost everything when, ironically, gold was discovered at his mill at Coloma. In the early 1840's he dispatched "sawyer gangs" to the East Bay hills from Sacramento by river boat to cut lumber for his enterprises. Another account by California Pioneer John Bidwell long-time assistant to Sutter, mentioned that Sutter's ships carried hides, tallow and other commodities down to San Francisco bay, returning with whipsawed lumber from the East Bay redwoods. Similarly, after Thomas O. Larkin, our Consul at Monterey, had played a leading role in the cession of California to the United States by Mexico, he did a brisk business in East Bay redwood, purchased mostly from English and French ship deserters. He bought the lumber at \$40 a thousand and sold it to ship captains at \$90.



"Doctor" Robert Semple, 6 foot 8 inch  
Kentucky printer and dentist who published the initial issue of the  
"Californian," at Monterey in August, 1846, first American newspaper printed  
in California, was buying East Bay redwood for his Benicia ventures by 1848.  
A year later, he was to serve as president of California's Constitutional  
Convention at Monterey.

(Next: Who achieved fame in early California who began their careers wresting  
a living from the East Bay redwoods? There is a distinguished tally including  
Sutter, Meiggs, the Reverend Mr. Taylor, Leidesdorff, Elam Brown, Alameda's  
Chipman and Auginbaugh and Jacob Harlan.)

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Installment Twenty-Two - Redwood Regional Park

A distinguished roll call of California

Argonauts wrested a living from the East Bay redwoods in the 1850's or spent time there and among them was that individualistic Methodist minister, the Reverend Mr. Taylor, who later became a bishop. He took enough time away from his San Francisco street preaching where he often used a whisky barrel for a pulpit, to split shingles in the East Bay redwoods in exchange for joists for his rectory. It was said of him that his stentorian voice could be heard by as many as 20,000 (without benefit of today's amplifying devices) and his missionary messages were popular.

Henry Meiggs of San Francisco's Meiggs Wharf fame, reputedly hired 500 men in 1849 to fell the choicest redwood timber in what is now Redwood Regional Park, hauled it to San Antonio, made up huge log rafts and towed them to "Yerba Buena" where the profits, they say, totaled \$500,000 in gold.

Although prominent in business, politics and the town's social circles, Meiggs was a rogue when it came to finance, and by 1854, he was in bankruptcy. While creditors were still stirring about, he loaded his family and remaining cash aboard a clipper and decamped for South America, never to return.

William A. Leidesdorff, U. S. Vice Consul at San Francisco and erstwhile sea captain who skippered the Julia Ann through the Golden Gate, developed a prospering business across the bay and derived income from East Bay redwood lumber. He was a black man and his name lives on in the street named after him in San Francisco.

Elam Brown, native of Herkimer County, N.Y. who bought the Acalanes Rancho from Leidesdorff and is credited with being the "father" of Lafayette was whipsawing redwood lumber in what is now a park as early as 1847. He ran a grist mill, was a member of California's first Constitutional convention and served two terms in the Assembly.

He came to California as the captain of a wagon train of 14 families.

From Alameda came William Worthington Chipman and Gideon Auginbaugh, pioneer developers of what later became an island community. In 1852, they contracted on shares with Joseph Bates, Franklin Saunders and C. H. Stone to cut and ship out redwood from the hills behind Brooklyn. Within six months, the pair were suing the contractors for failing to deliver. But the price they paid to the son of the original grantee, Antonio Maria Peralta, for what was later to become the incorporated City of Alameda, was a bargain: \$14,000 in gold on the barrel head.

In 1847, Jacob Harlan, California Argonaut who accompanied the ill-fated Donner Party a portion of the way to the gold-fields and authored "California, 1846-1888," was cutting fence rails and splitting shingles with his helper, Richard Swift, for Leidesdorff. He tells of one redwood tree producing 15,000 shingles which he sold for \$5 a thousand.

During the period 1855-97, Dr. Gibbons who even in those years envisioned a handsome recreational area where Redwood Regional Park has now been established, took many of his distinguished friends from the scientific community to the hills to see the implausible 33-1/2-foot redwood stump. They often lunched in the hollow remnants which Dr. Gibbons referred to as "this wonderful reception hall prepared by nature." Among those who came to gaze in wonder and astonishment were:



John Muir, the famed author-naturalist; Dr. Asa Gray, botanist, author, Harvard professor of natural history and member of the Hall of Fame; Dr. Josiah D. Whitney of Mt. Whitney fame, author and early Chief of the State Geological Survey; and Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, English naturalist and author, who shared with Darwin, credit for the development of the theory of natural selection.

(Next: Idlers and vagabonds prowl the East Bay redwoods and "theft, robbery and, I might add, murder, are but every day occurrences." Officials league with thieves to enlarge their hauls. Poet George Sterling and author Jack London roam the redwoods in later years. Lumber is shipped to San Francisco, Oakland, Pacheco, Martinez, Mission San Jose, Alvarado, Alameda, Hayward, Sacramento and Benicia.)

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#### Installment Twenty-Three - Redwood Regional Park

After the turn of the century such men as George Sterling, San Francisco's only Poet Laureate--who was accorded the same honor by the exclusive Bohemian Club--and was referred to by some as "the Dante of the age," and his good friend, the even more famous Jack London, roamed the East Bay redwoods and often camped and picnicked there.

Lastly and perhaps only because of his resounding name, Harry Jubilee Bee, an Englishman who jumped ship in 1830 should be added to the distinguished tally. He was an early settler in the East Bay redwoods, coming from the Santa Cruz forests in 1842.

What was the destination of the redwood lumber so laboriously whipsawed in the East Bay hills and later cut to size in steam sawmills?

The majority of it went to the "boomtown" of Yerba Buena, now San Francisco, but substantial shipments went to Oakland, Pacheco, Martinez, Mission San Jose, Alvarado, Alameda, Hayward, Sacramento and Benicia.

James Buskirk La Rue, one of the founders of the estuarine trading post and redwood lumber shipping port of San Antonio, set down that he sold 300,000 board feet of redwood for the construction of the Young Ladies Seminary at Benicia. It is more familiarly known today as Oakland's Mills College.

Lamson was not insensitive to the plight of the recipients of Spanish and Mexican land grants as American squatters

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moved in following the signing with Mexico of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in March, 1848. His comments also dealt forthrightly with wide-spread cattle and horse thefts which afflicted both the new American settlers and the lords of the Ranchos.

"The great facilities" Lamson wrote "for concealing oxen, horses, and other property in the innumerable secluded valleys and hiding places that occur in every direction throughout the mountain country which, commencing at these redwoods, extends to the Valley of the San Joaquin, offers too many inducements to the idlers and vagabonds that prowl about the country, to be resisted. Consequently, theft, robbery, and, I might almost add, murder, are but every day occurrences.

"No man who owns a horse, an ox, or a swine, can feel secure for a moment when it is out of his sight."

This comment may, in part, explain the hair-trigger resentment that welled up in the "redwood boys" when their stock was stolen, and their enthusiasm for summary justice.

Lamson wrote that his neighbor, Mr. R. lost an ox and a horse and another neighbor, Mr. A. lost "three valuable oxen," all on August 17, 1854.

"These thieves," Lamson continued, "are often associated in large gangs and consist of both Americans and Mexicans; and so great is the number of their accomplices in some villages that when one of them is detected, he is almost always provided with the means of escape. The very officer who is commissioned to arrest him is sometimes a party in the theft...Many of the butchers are leagued with the thieves and, by buying this stolen property at low prices, thus share the profits with them.

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"Immense herds of cattle and horses covered the hills and plains of California previous to its conquest by the Americans.

"These cattle are fast disappearing under the plundering system pursued by the conquerors of the country.

"They (the cattle) are not wild, or only partially so, and each has its owner and each is branded with the owner's mark. Many of the owners are wealthy Mexicans who claim large tracts of land by grants from the Mexican government and who, too indolent to till their land, breed these great herds of cattle which find ample sustenance on the rich grounds over which they roam and which cost their owners nothing but the support of a few families of Indians or the poorer class of Mexicans who have more or less Indian blood in their veins.

"These cattle are considered legitimate plunder by the Americans who shoot them down without compunction or the slightest regard for the rights of their owners who have, themselves, in several instances, been shot in defense of their property.

"For more than a year, a large portion of the lumberers in these woods received almost their whole supply of beef from this source. I have heard a fellow boast of the number of Spanish cattle his rifle had brought him..."

(Next: When Don Luis Peralta divided his 43,272-acre Spanish land grant among his four sons, Antonio Maria Peralta received some 10,000 acres which included the East Bay redwoods where Redwood Regional Park is now situated. The Peraltas fought a losing battle against squatters and cattle thieves.)

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Installment Twenty-Four - Redwood Regional Park

While some of the redwood acreage was in the public domain, much was owned by Antonio Maria Peralta whose father, Luis had received a Spanish (correct) land grant of 43,272 acres from Gov. Pablo Vicente de Sola in 1820. When the land was divided among the four sons Antonio, had, among other things inherited a portion of the East Bay redwoods.

"I have been told," Lamson recounted, "that Antonio Peralta, who resides near San Antonio and who formerly owned about 8,000 beeves, found himself obliged to drive them from his pasture grounds back into the mountains. But even there, his losses continued and between some sales and some robberies, his herds have diminished one half.

"Here is another source of difficulty and of hatred between the Americans and the Mexicans. This Antonio Peralta who bears the title of Don, is very rich and claims a large tract of land, on a portion of which are situated the villages of Oakland, Clinton and San Antonio...

"I was at Peralta's house some months since when a man, in the course of conversation, used the word 'squatter.'

"Peralta could not or would not speak English but he well understood the significance of that word and I was struck with the expression of scorn and hatred which he threw into his countenance as he slowly repeated, 'squatter, squatter.'"

Then Lamson drew a poignant word picture of the landed Don as he tried to cope with hordes of squatters, redwood country outlaws and itinerant thieves.

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"Peralta," he wrote, "had lived quietly for many years in the possession of his immense estate, surrounded by his herds of cattle and droves of horses, the sale of which procured him all the luxuries as well as necessities which a Mexican requires.

"Void of care, his greatest pleasure, aside from his siesta and brandy, consisted in riding on horseback over his grounds without let or hindrance from fences, walls or gates, for many and many a league; passing away his time in ease and indolence; satisfied with the existing state of things and never wishing for a change; living in a country rich and beautiful by nature, beyond description, but still capable of the greatest improvements which, perhaps, he never dreamed of, or, having no taste to enjoy, never wished to see.

"What must have been his astonishment and indignation to find his domain suddenly inundated by a horde of beings more dreaded and more hated by him than would have been an army of vandals, who parcelled his land into lots and enclosed them in fences, the materials for which were stolen from his forests in the mountains until, his great territorial possessions had dwindled into an insignificant quarter section..."

Lamson was a welcome guest at the homes of Spaniards and Mexicans in the area. In 1855, he tells of drafting a deed from Joaquin Moraga to J. W. Gann.

"Much formality and labor is required in doing business of this sort between the Americans and Mexicans," Lamson wrote. "An interpreter is necessary...Jose Moraga (Joaquin's son) came to transact the business..."

Bourbon, apparently, was the symbol and hallmark of all holidays in the redwoods (in that time, it was always spelled Red Woods) and everybody was hellbent for hiccups as Christmas, 1854, neared.



"I had an invitation from a Missourian to spend Christmas with him," Lamson wrote in his journal, "but declined.

"He is a very kind man when sober but a perfect bulldog, a maniac, when drunk."

(Next: Christmas in the East Bay redwoods - "plenty of whiskey and a glorious time" although Lamson shunned the festivities. Election Day in Moraga Canyon with drinks available "at the expense of the candidates." Lamson's drunken landlord becomes violent.)

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Installment Twenty-Five - Redwood Regional Park

Christmas, 1854, was a Bacchanalian bender in the East Bay redwoods and, according to Lamson, "the whole country around here was invited to the frolic which was to take place on Sunday, the 24th.

"A large company assembled and they had plenty of whiskey and a glorious time.

"The host got drunk and crazy and became very pious.

"To wind up his Christmas festivities, he came down to Parson Brown's, the fighting Missouri Campbellite minister, had a meeting called, made a public profession of religion and was baptized and then taken into the church."

There were few temperance snouters and wowsers in the redwoods and most residents hardly knew what water tasted like.

So Lamson's account of election day, September 1853, seemed to fit the pattern.

"I attended an election of state and county officers," he dutifully noted. "The polls were opened in Moraga Canyon about two miles distant from my camp. I passed, in company with several others, over a high ridge separating the two canyons and down into a very deep canyon to a steam sawmill near which the election was held.

"There were not a great number of electors but there was a considerable excitement and not a small quantity of liquor was drunk at the expense of the candidates for office.

"I felt," Lamson wrote with the true indifference of an abstainer, "but little interest in the subject and though I deposited my ballot, I would scarcely have given a bit (12-1/2 cents) to have secured the election of the candidates for whom I voted."

Evidently solemn and staid and, by his own account, not gregarious, Lamson apparently viewed the general redwoods atmosphere of impious hooray, cheerful tumults and upper case orgies with disapproval. This undoubtedly did not endear him to the two-fisted drinking woodsmen, and while others were probably also the targets of their displeasure, Lamson seemed to come in for more than his share. Toward the end of his stay in the redwoods his decisions as a rustic justice of the peace likely did not meet with universal favor.

In any event, after he moved his store and lodging from the present Redwood Regional Park locale to the Moraga Redwoods' Indian Valley, he rented a house from John R. Allen, "another drunkard with whom I am in daily contact" and the tempo of his troubles increased.

Not everyone likes his landlord and Allen, obviously, fitted the pattern. Of him, Lamson wrote:

"...He is ignorant and vain and conceited and converses in a most ludicrously pompous style.

"He is exceedingly filthy and negligent of his dress and person; very lazy and idle.

"He was in the Mexican war where the deeds of daring and feats of valor he performed would excite the astonishment of anyone less than the renowned Jack Falstaff."

Not long after he moved to Allen's house, Lamson wrote:

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"Today has been enacted a scene of violence which in any other country than California would subject the perpetrator to severe punishment.

"Allen, having wagered his house in a race and lost, got drunk and crazy and when he came home, after many threats and much abuse, to which I made no reply, he took an axe and beat down a partition which formed an entry to the stairway between his room and that occupied by me. He then carried the boards of the partition out of doors and broke several bottles and other things. He was extremely violent and riotous..."

(Next: "Drunken scoundrels" try to ride their horses into Lamson's quarters as he stands ready with a club to do battle; another tosspot fires indiscriminately into the night with a double barrelled shotgun and lead pellets whistle over his bed; another guzzler, ired because Lamson won't sell him whiskey, lays seige with a rock bombardment.)

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#### Installment Twenty-Six - Redwood Regional Park

Meeting out justice in the East Bay redwoods was a chancy job as Lamson discovered and "in consequence" he wrote, "of several decisions I made in court against a gang of drunken scoundrels" was prompted to move to the comparative security of Parson Brown's home. It was about that time too that Lamson determined to close his store "as speedily as possible, having been far less successful than I had anticipated."

Reminiscent of the untrammelled days of "Shootin' Newton" Kansas where cowboys habitually rode into the bar for drinks for steed and self, some "young fellows who were just returning drunk from a ball," tried to ride a horse into Lamson's quarters. The door was shattered and the embattled Justice stood ready with a club when the "rascals," George Hays and William S. Harper, rode off.

The redwood "natives'" behavior both vexed and perplexed Lamson.

"My 'camp' took fire in the chimney early this morning," he wrote of his days in the middle redwoods. "It was discovered and the alarm given by some western men who had recently built a 'camp' within three or four rods of mine.

"They stood yelling most vociferously, 'fire, fire,' while I ran out with a bucket of water and extinguished it.

"Queer fellows, Pike county men.

"Provoked at their stupidity, I did not stop to thank them for notifying me of the fire.

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"I believe it was not from any wish to save my shanty but merely for amusement that they sang out so lustily."

There was seldom a dull moment for Lamson.

A "crazy young Texan, drunk and mad" tried to draw Pullen, against whom he had a grudge, into a fight and when this did not succeed, fired indiscriminately into the night with a double-barrelled shotgun. Some of the shot penetrated Lamson's cabin whistling over his head.

Lamson dismissed the incident as a "trivial affair."

About a month later, however, Lamson's "camp" was laid seige to by Pullen, an inveterate redwoods guzzler and foe of tranquility, who bombarded the cabin with rocks, broke down the door, and finally roused the woodsmen in the area, three of whom arrived post-haste in puris naturalibus.

This backwoods camisado apparently turned on the fact that Pullen was suffering from an acute case of spoonfoggles and wanted to replenish his supply of whiskey and Lamson adamantly refused to sell.

Lamson observed that Pullen "had been drinking all night and raving like a maniac...was furious...like a madman...and his ravings were incessant, his language was most horribly profane and insulting to the last degree. Many a time he threatened to kill me..." Lamson added that he clubbed Pullen three times during the "riot."

The siege continued for two days after which, Lamson said, Pullen "suffering from delirium tremens...became sensible of the excesses he had committed and...sent for me and pleaded most earnestly for my forgiveness..."

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Unschoolled in felling trees--especially the towering redwoods--Lamson encountered disaster when he applied his "installment cutting" technique.

"There was a handsome redwood tree standing directly in front of my cabin and 40 to 50 feet distant," he wrote. "Being ambitious of felling one of these noble trees, I took an axe and went to work on it.

"I had cut about two thirds off at night and left it standing to finish the work the next day.

"But a heavy wind arose in the night and brought down the tree with a crash that was heard far out of the canyon. I made no further attempts at tree felling..."

(Next: A destructive fire breaks out in the redwoods and can be easily seen in San Francisco "at a distance of 18 or 20 miles"; two men hollow out a redwood trunk 14 feet in diameter as four men remain seated inside; burnt brandy,sugar and flour are a sovereign home remedy for diarrhea)

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Installment Twenty-Seven - Redwood Regional Park

About 1850 and before Lamson reached the East Bay redwoods, he was told, wild cattle stampeded in the canyon where Redwood Regional Park is now situated and swept all before them including the loggers' tents and shanties.

Not long after his tree-felling experience, Lamson wrote of a night fire that swept through the redwoods and could be easily seen in San Francisco.

"A destructive fire broke out in the woods," he wrote, "and swept through the masses of shavings and dry wood with which the forest was filled, burning up many cabins of the lumbermen with all their provisions and clothes as well as large quantities of lumber.

"The fire, as it rolled down the hills, presented a magnificent spectacle to the inhabitants of San Francisco at a distance of 18 or 20 miles..."

Although he saw redwoods felled daily, it was "a scene of no ordinary sublimity to behold one of these monster trees... fall to the ground," Lamson declared.

"I saw the trunk of a gigantic redwood, though not one of the largest size," Lamson recounted. "It measured about 300 to 320 feet in height, 14 feet in diameter at the base and six feet at the height of 125 feet. Larger trees than this are often found but seldom one so perfect in its symmetry.

"It had been felled by two men who had cut off a portion of it seven feet long which they were hollowing into a cylinder

with the intention of taking it to New England for exhibition.

"The two owners were now at work splitting pieces off the inside and three or four men were seated in it without at all obstructing the operations of the workmen."

Lamson also cited the case of two young axmen felling a huge redwood against which leaned another tree that had already been cut. Moments after the trees fell "striking the ground with a force that made it tremble and with a noise like the report of booming cannon," Lamson reported this colloquy between the lumbermen:

"Ah! We would go a great many miles in Massachusetts to see such a sight as this. But we would never see anything like it there."

This was true, but the glory of the massive virgin redwoods was long past the zenith. An 1854 news item remarked:

"Soon the whole neighborhood will be cleared of growing timber. Already, the fairest and largest of the trees have fallen before fire, ax and saw.

"These magnificent pillars which form so strange a crown to the mountains when seen from San Francisco and the bay, are slowly disappearing."

Diarrhea was almost endemic in the redwoods, due, probably to primitive sanitation, and Lamson recalls paying a San Francisco doctor \$138.88 to "cure" him, only to suffer a relapse.

Home remedies are sometimes best, for the diarist said "a man who had suffered from the same disease fortunately called in and gave me a dose of burnt brandy, sugar and flour which immediately checked it."



Fortunately, Lamson always had a supply of brandy and square-faced bottles of reassuring design and content on hand as a dealer in spirits and he tells how he rode to Martinez in December, 1854, to renew his license.

"I am obliged to have two of them," he wrote, "in order to transact the very limited business in which I am engaged for one of which, that of 'keeping a tavern and retailing liquors' I am charged \$30 per quarter and for the other, 'selling goods,' \$7.50 a quarter. Besides this, I pay the county recorder a fee of \$1 for each license. This makes an annual charge for licenses of \$158." Other taxes, he added, swelled the sum to \$175 annually.

(Next: James Buskirk LaRue founds the trading post of San Antonio on Slaughterhouse Creek, an arm of the San Antonio estuary. It is the entrepot for the redwoods. Milled redwood is transshipped here; there are week-end carousals and an occasional lynching.)

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#### Installment Twenty-Eight - Redwood Regional Park

Entrepot for the redwoods was San Antonio, founded by Argonaut James Buskirk La Rue, former Michigan lumberman, with a little trading post or general store.

It was situated on an arm or slough of the San Antonio estuary and on the banks of picturesquely-named Slaughterhouse Creek. It was served by Commerce Street which later became 14th Avenue. The site today is approximately at the intersection of 14th Avenue and East 12th Street.

In those days, a big Indian shell mound was nearby.

Milled redwood was transshipped there for San Francisco; swaggering Redwoods bravos reeled about in drunken weekend carousals; and, lest it be forgotten, "Judge Lynch" occasionally held court there.

La Rue, who later became an Alameda County supervisor and legislator, began in a modest way with a trading post that consisted merely of a huge tent constructed of bull hides stretched over whipsawed lumber. When the hides became wet in the rain and then dried and stiffened in the sun, the establishment was suffused with a musty odor. Soon he built a new general store entirely of whipsawed redwood.

A man of substance, La Rue, in a few years, owned large portions of what were then Clinton and Brooklyn, now East Oakland. He gave much of the land for Independence Square, later renamed San Antonio Park.

First only sail boats touched at La Rue's pier. But in 1850, Captain Thomas Gray's propeller steamer "Kangaroo" began a two-trips-a-week schedule which soon was expanded to 10 trips a week. Not long afterward, the Ferries "Boston," "Kate Hayes" and "Clinton" began calling there.

An enterprising man, La Rue founded the Oakland and San Antonio Steam Navigation Company, building the "Clinton" and the "Contra Costa."

Burgess pointed out that "during the 1850's, the redwoods mills were the economic center of the East Bay, and nearly all east-west roads were planned in relation to them...The importance of the region which probably had a greater collective population than any East Bay town can be seen by the way the county line of 1853 evenly divided the redwoods between Contra Costa and Alameda counties. Until the redwoods were destroyed, each county had an election precinct there."

As you drive down present-day Park Boulevard in Oakland you may idly ponder the fact that the 1850's route down the western slopes from the redwoods to San Antonio followed that course and 13th Avenue.

In 1852, lumber was being hauled southward from the Prince Mill over a new road following Redwood and San Leandro Creeks through to Castro Valley; four years later, Thorne's mill had been added to the route. Thorne also controlled a road leading to the hamlet of Clinton and eastward through Moraga Valley to Martinez.

Some of the prices prevailing about 1854 included shingles at from \$4 to \$5.50 a thousand; clapboards at six cents a piece or four cents in larger quantities; and the price for hauling shingles from the redwoods to San Antonio, \$1.50 a thousand.

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Litigation revealed that an 1853 agreement between John S. Nichols and the Spicer Mill called for Nichols to deliver "saw logs" at the logway, properly peeled and in proper lengths, at \$7.50 a thousand board feet "the same to be measured by the rule laid down in the 'ready reckoner.'" Nichols agreed to deliver "in such quantity that the mill shall at no time stand idle (provided the amount does not exceed 9000 feet per day)."

(Next: Lamson describes Arcadian scenes on the Gold Rush era ranches near the brawling redwood forests; as Justice of the Peace, he is indicted on counts of forgery and altering and falsifying records; he agonizes over how a conviction would consign him to "infamy and affix a stigma to my name;" he rejects advice to flee and is ultimately acquitted.)

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Installment Twenty-Nine - Redwood Regional Park

Brief but vivid insights into the Arcadian tranquility of the ranch lands of that time, at some remove from the roistering redwoods, were provided from time to time in Lamson's account.

"I rode to Kendall's, (on Grizzly Creek, now Moraga's Valley Hill Drive) a distance of four or five miles among the mountains," he set down. "On my way, I passed the threshing floors of Jose Moraga.

"This threshing floor consisted of nothing more than a smooth piece of ground selected for its proximity to the field of grain.

"A huge pile of wheat in the straw is made and surrounded by a fence. Into this enclosure, a large number of horses are turned and, being driven 'round, are made to tread out the grain.

"In this instance, 60 or 70 horses were employed and their driver, an Indian, kept them in motion by the most vociferous hooting and shouting.

"After being threshed, it is winnowed on the spot by throwing it up with forks when the wind carries away the chaff and straw."

As a layman Redwoods Justice of the Peace of Township 2, apparently appointed to the post September 25, 1854, Lamson underwent his greatest travail when he was indicted in May, 1855, by the Contra Costa County Grand Jury on counts of forgery and altering and falsifying his official records.

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He was ultimately acquitted by a jury after a "few moments of consultation" on January 8, 1856, but not before he agonized over the impending trial which might "consign me to the state prison and to infamy and affix a stigma to my name which would bring sorrow and mortification to my child and family....."

Stubbornly, he rejected friends' advice to flee since he was at liberty on his own recognizance and because of the "possibility perjured testimony might convict me."

The charges (the forgery count was dismissed) stemmed from what appeared to be a routine justice court case before Lamson in which one John Burkholder had filed a complaint against Constable Felix G. Beauchamp of Lafayette, alleging non-feasance and misfeasance. Josiah A. Fletcher represented Burkholder; J. Franklin Williams was the attorney for Beauchamp.

There was no trial, as such in the redwoods for the attorneys agreed that judgment was to be rendered in favor of the party prevailing upon a demurrer. Appeals were planned.

Beauchamp lost. Then, it developed, the Court of Sessions judge ordered Lamson to amend his docket to make it more complete and show that no testimony was taken and judgment was rendered on the demurrer.

That was when Beauchamp and his lawyer went to Contra Costa County District Attorney Hiram Mills and demanded a Grand Jury investigation, alleging records tampering.

"I had gone to Martinez," Lamson wrote of the fateful May 11, and was riding a horse with a blanket for a saddle, "quietly pursuing my way back when I was overtaken by a deputy sheriff armed with a

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revolver and knife, accompanied by a guard who was also armed to the teeth, and arrested on two indictments.....

"Arrived at the prison, the jailer proposed putting me into a cell that was occupied by another prisoner, but not knowing what sort of company I might fall into, I begged of him as a favor to grant me a separate cell..."

He was thrown into jail, he said, where three others already were lodged--an American, a Frenchman and a Chileno. Two were awaiting trial for horse stealing and the Frenchman was serving a term for involvement in an affray with some Mexicans.

The jailer, Lamson recounted, "bade me good night, then turning the bolts of the ponderous iron door upon me. The night was cold and my bed was the brick floor on which I spread the blankets..."

"To be arraigned and imprisoned on a charge of having committed so heinous a crime was most humiliating, however conscious I was of my innocence."

After his release, first on \$400 bail on each count, Lamson resigned as Justice on May 16 and by October he was operating the Nicaragua Saloon and cigar stand in Marysville. It was not a successful venture and in December, he sold out.

(Next: Lamson pens an embittered epilog to his 18 months of life in what is now Redwood Regional Park--"as for a portion of my departed neighbors--brutal, lawless scoundrels--I am heartily glad they are gone;" but he deplores the absence of his friends; he books passage back to the East Coast on September 21, 1861.)

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Installment Thirty - Redwood Regional Park

Friends, apparently, continued to try to persuade Lamson to avoid the impending trial and, in a sort of soliloquy, Lamson declared:

"I was not, however, convinced by their arguments. I was reluctant to give my enemies any pretext for saying that I have fled from justice. I was unwilling that there should be any grounds for renewing the prosecution at any future time....

"I felt I was bound in honor to appear for trial. I felt that a neglect to surrender myself would be tacit acknowledgment of guilt and that stigma would forever attach to me for such neglect.

"Conscious of innocence, I was therefore, inflexibly, perhaps obstinately, resolved, in defiance of every argument, to hazard the chances of a trial, whatever might be the result, believing that a conviction, even, however unjust, would be but little more disgraceful than a cowardly avoidance of a trial..."

In an apparently atrabilious mood, Lamson also penned what well might have been an embittered epilog to his meticulous account of his 18 months of life in what is now Redwood Regional Park.

"I have alluded," he wrote, "to an important revolution which was going on in this portion of the redwoods in which I am located.

"Three or four months ago, I was surrounded by a deep, dense forest in which a busy population was at work. But their

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industry fast swept away the forest and as the timber grew scarce, they began to remove to other places.

"They continued until our society was reduced to 10 men living in a little cluster of four camps.

"But even this little colony has taken a sudden resolution to migrate and this morning, the last man went and I am left alone.....

"As for a portion of my departed neighbors--brutal, lawless scoundrels--I am heartily glad they are gone.

"But I had one good friend among them whose absence I deeply regret. From the first moment I came into these woods until we shook hands and parted this morning, Benjamin Wakefield has stood by me, a kind, benevolent, warm-hearted steadfast friend.

"So here I am in the depths of a California forest, shut up in a lonely cabin on a winter night, scribbling my diary for the amusement of my daughter, rejoicing in the departure of my foes and deploring the absence of my friends..."

Lamson, the often homesick Maine expatriate, spent nine years in California, Oregon, Washington and Nevada. He took passage for the East Coast aboard the S. S. Sonora on September 21, 1861, arriving in New York on October 13.

From then on, the inscrutable book of fate drew the curtain on whatever destiny held in store for Joseph Lamson.

Like the 300 or 400 loggers who populated the East Bay redwoods at the time, Lamson busied himself with the homely, hard, day-to-day tasks that early settlers in California found it necessary to perform to wrest a livelihood from the wilderness.

*more--*



Above them, like a verdant wave against the blue of the California sky were arrayed the brooding redwoods.

"They are not like trees," John Masefield, England's Poet Laureate, once wrote, "they are like the spirits. The glens in which they grow are not like places, they are like haunts--haunts of the centaurs or the gods."

"The trees rise up with dignity, power and majesty as though they had been there forever.....

"Sometimes in cathedrals one feels the awe and majesty of columns.

"These columns were more impressive than anything of stone; these columns were alive. They were more like gods than anything I have ever seen...The stars shone about their heads like chaplets."

Such was the majestic, awe-inspiring setting in which Joseph Lamson lived, toiled and wrote for 18 brief months in California's primitive, natal years.

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